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HORATIO PARKER'S *HORA NOVISSIMA*, OP. 30 (1892):

A CRITICAL HISTORY AND ANALYSIS

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BRIAN EDWARD BURNS

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HORATIO PARKER'S *HORA NOVISSIMA*, OP. 30 (1892):
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A DOCUMENT APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

BY

Dr. Richard Zielinski, Chair

Dr. William Wakefield, Co-Chair

Dr. Roland Barrett

Dr. Michael Lee

Dr. Judith Pender

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ABSTRACT

This document is a critical history and analysis of Horatio William Parker's 1892 cantata *Hora Novissima*, Op. 30, an 11-movement work for chorus, large orchestra, and four soloists. Its libretto is drawn from the 12th-century Latin poem *De contemptu mundi* by the otherwise largely unknown Bernard of Cluny. Parker's setting is drawn entirely from the first of the poem's three lengthy books, portions of the text that deal mostly with the splendors of heaven and the complete joy of the elect that will populate the celestial country. *Hora Novissima* was premiered in New York in 1893 and received numerous performances in the decades leading up to the First World War. While performances were less frequent in the subsequent decades, the work has never disappeared completely from the repertoire and is considered by many to be the best example of its type and an emblem of the art music of 19th-century America.

The study is divided into seven chapters, beginning with an introductory chapter that outlines the need for the study, the organization of the document, and the limitations of the study. This first chapter will also place *Hora Novissima* in its historical context as a representative work of the Second New England School. Chapter II is a review of the literature pertaining to the piece, its composer, and the poem *De contemptu mundi* followed by a brief summary. Materials surveyed are wide ranging, as literature specific to Parker and his compositions is rather limited. The third chapter is a biographical sketch of Horatio Parker, included to place the composer in his historical context and provide a more complete understanding of his compositional worldview. The poem *De contemptu mundi* is discussed in Chapter IV, both in terms of its history and scholarly reception and in terms of its structure. Several translations of

the portions of the Latin poem set by Parker are included as a resource to those wishing to further understand the text of *Hora Novissima*. Both verse and prose translations are included in the hope of creating a richer tapestry of possible meanings.

The principal body of the study's original research is found in Chapters V and VI. The former is an extended reception history of *Hora Novissima*, including criticism and commentary ranging from before its 1893 premiere to nearly the present day. A fairly full picture of the work's journey is provided, with opinions of all kinds represented in an attempt to be as complete as the current record allows. The chapter is divided chronologically, which allows trends in criticism to stand out more obviously. Chapter VI follows, and is a musical analysis of the piece, arranged by movement. The seventh and final chapter is the conclusion to the document; it briefly revisits the basic ideas of the first six chapters and provides some final thoughts regarding *Hora Novissima* place in the repertoire.

Hora Novissima is an understudied, underperformed work. Parker was highly regarded in his own era, and many critics consider *Hora Novissima* to be not only his finest work, but among the finest American compositions of the 19th century. This document may be a small step in the reintroduction of both the piece and its composer to new generations of conductors and scholars.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND NEED FOR THE STUDY

Introduction

Horatio Parker's extended cantata *Hora Novissima*, Op. 30, stands toward the end of a long line of similarly proportioned and designed works. Its stylistic lineage can be traced back through the works of Arthur Sullivan and other older contemporaries to the great oratorios of Mendelssohn and even those of Handel.¹ The orchestration includes the traditional complement of four soloists and a large chorus, and its architecture features a neat separation of the work into two large halves further divided into discrete numbers. This type of division clearly places the work in a recognizably earlier style, especially when compared to larger-scale works of just a few years later such as Elgar's through-composed masterpiece *The Dream of Gerontius*. Parker's American contemporaries often favored similarly time-tested designs, which has made American music of the late 19th century somewhat of an oddity in terms of the overall arc of American history. Parker and his school were staunchly on the side of the tried and true in an American culture that prized innovation above almost all.

The composers of the Second New England School² have suffered the fate of many of their equally distinguished colleagues throughout the history of Western art

¹ *Hora Novissima* also features allusions to composers from even earlier eras, including Palestrina. See below in Chapter VI.

² While a flurry of studies concerning this "school" accompanied the bicentennial celebrations in 1976, serious study, driven by musicological rather than patriotic/historical reasons has been slow in appearing. Scholarly work on individuals representative of this era in American musical history has been excellent, if not exhaustive. An overarching look at the group as a whole, and its impact on later composers, has yet to be attempted. Other possibilities of categorization are also arising, such as the concept of an Anglo-American school in this era, which might be an excellent solution, especially because George Whitefield Chadwick, Horatio Parker, and Arthur Foote were quite vocal in their opposition to blatant American nationalism in music.

music: defying neat categorization, falling, as they do, between the cracks of major eras, they become relegated to brief, passing mentions in the textbooks with which musicians-in-training are required to struggle. The principal guilt inherent in many of these artists is, in a very general sense, the sin of being too much in line with the spirit of their times. Some artists conform to the times in which they live so perfectly that they seem out of step with our conception of the steady progress of music history through the eras: in belonging so completely to their era, they have excluded themselves, in some ways, from ours. This is certainly the case with George Whitefield Chadwick, Arthur Foote, Amy Beach, and Horatio Parker.³ All were celebrated during their lifetimes, both in the United States and in Europe. Parker's works, especially *Hora Novissima*, received repeated performances throughout the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first two of the twentieth. When the Victorian/Edwardian world of Parker and his contemporaries yielded to the horrors of the First World War and the subsequent sea change that descended on Western art, however, performances of his works (and those of his fellow New Englanders) dried up. The passing of the era of their genesis left Parker's works referred to by the wrong kind of descriptors: too German, too English, not American enough, and the biggest sin of all: too derivative. The cosmopolitan worldview that produced *Hora Novissima* gave way to a more parochial one: American composers felt compelled to use more indigenous models to avoid sounding too much like their European counterparts. No less influential a writer than Nicholas Slominsky stated baldly that the Second New England School "upheld

³ This list is meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive. John Knowles Paine, the progenitor of the Second New England School, and Charles Martin Loeffler suffered the same overall historical treatment as those mentioned in the body of the text. Edward MacDowell and Charles Tomlinson Griffes, although they really belong to other compositional spheres, could be included, as well.

New England's fame as a musical center without furthering the advance of a national idiom" and that "there are few pages of purely American music in their voluminous works."⁴ This sea change in the musical worldview of American musicians (and the always-influential critics of the day) necessarily marginalized Parker's generation as out of touch, old fashioned, and representative of a European hegemony that America's rise to superpower status seemed to negate.

While the shift in attitude toward a more overtly "American" art music came in many guises that, through some channels, could trace their ultimate lineage back to European models, an insistence on discarding the perceived Germanic bombast of the late-Romantic era was a commonality in the music most often presented for study by the faculties of music schools: in essence, the American century was one of innovation, not of tradition. Parker, Chadwick, Beach, and their contemporaries ostensibly represented the latter, and therefore fell through the scholarly cracks as representatives of a school that didn't actually exist, but was simply an extension of European cultural identity. While even a cursory study of the music of the Second New England School disproves the idea of their work as pale imitation, such studies have been so rarely undertaken that no scholarly consensus has been reached regarding the school and its output. Serious examination of their works by the academic community seems to have been elusive since the very beginning. E. Douglas Bombeger noted what he called a "troubling observation" in the reaction of European critics to the music of Gilded Age America, namely that:

⁴ Slominsky's comments are from an essay titled "Composers of New England," which appeared in the periodical *Modern Music* in 1931. Quoted in Bill F. Faucett, *George Whitefield Chadwick: The Life and Music of the Pride of New England* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2012).

...despite the firmness of their convictions on American lack of originality, the German critics could not describe precisely what was missing, other than to state that there is nothing uniquely American about the works. Their comments provide no insight on the exact nature of musical influence and its effect on a composer's originality, except to reinforce its subjective quality. In this one area of musical criticism, it seems that a critic is free to state an opinion without tangible proof.

The issue of originality, a highly subjective concept at best, was therefore used repeatedly to undermine the significance of the music.⁵

While Bomberger's comments refer to a specific 1892 concert tour of Germany that featured works by some New Englanders and some other, now considered lesser, American composers,⁶ his statements concerning criticism of 19th-century American music are really emblematic of a mindset that continued virtually unchecked through the 20th century, namely that American composers were not yet advanced enough to create art, but were well-trained enough to exhibit significant skill as craftsmen aping their (European) betters. The works of Horatio Parker and his contemporaries deserve a more thorough examination.

⁵ E. Douglas Bomberger, *A Tidal Wave of Encouragement: American Composers' Concerts in the Gilded Age* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002), 113.

⁶ Ibid.

Need for the Study

Whatever the reasons, and there are surely more than those mentioned above, the music of Horatio Parker and his contemporaries has been neglected by both scholars and performers. While there have been some excellent biographical studies written, particularly recent ones of Parker, Beach, Chadwick, and MacDowell,⁷ there have been very few mentions of their works that go beyond short, but well-wrought, analyses of individual pieces within the context of the greater narrative arc of their composers' lives. There is, therefore, a great deal of room for stand-alone studies pertaining to the major works of these composers. It is hoped that this document will provide a solid starting point for researchers wishing to delve into Horatio Parker's *Hora Novissima* and be a useful reference tool for conductors considering programming the work.

Hora Novissima is a work that rewards extensive study; it contains music that is diverse and interesting, derivative and original by turns, and well-crafted enough to gain the grudging admiration of even its fiercest critics. This document treats it at length and from several different angles, delving into the poem that forms its libretto, sorting through scholarly and popular criticism of the work, analyzing the musical form and content of the piece, and presenting some conclusions as to its place in the repertoire.

⁷ See below in Chapter II.

Organization of the Document

This document is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter will contain introductory material, a brief explanation of the need for a stand-alone study of *Hora Novissima*, and this description of the paper's organization. The second chapter is a survey of academic and critical literature that pertains in some way to *Hora Novissima*, its composer, or the school of American composers active at the time of its composition. This survey is fairly wide-ranging, as scholarship specific to *Hora Novissima* is limited to brief (but often excellent) descriptions in biographies of, or other studies pertaining to, Parker. The exception to the previous comment is William Kearns's fine motivic and basic harmonic analysis of the piece, which can be found in both his dissertation and his biography of Parker. Both of these feature prominently throughout this document. A final section of the literature review will examine sources that pertain directly to *De contemptu mundi*, the poem which provides the text for *Hora Novissima*.

The third chapter contains a brief biographical sketch of Horatio Parker. As a solid, well-researched biography of the composer already exists,⁸ this sketch will serve more as an introduction to the basic facts of Parker's life than a full biography. Chapter Four deals specifically with *De contemptu mundi*. Information regarding its origins, its creator, and the changing view of scholars concerning its meaning is included; the hope is that conductors will engage the poem as fully as they delve into musical matters. In the vein of service to conductors and others researching *Hora Novissima*, this chapter also contains side-by-side comparisons of several translations of the text,⁹ including the

⁸ William K. Kearns, *Horatio Parker, 1863-1919: His Life, Music, and Ideas*, Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1990.

⁹ The translations included are only of the portions of the poem set by Parker.

most recent scholarly version and the singing translation penned by the composer's mother.

Chapter Five traces the history of criticism of the piece, using reviews, scholarly articles, books, and other resources to create a historical identity for *Hora Novissima*. This chapter will be the lengthiest in the document, as the critical history of the work dates from previews of its premiere in 1893 to mentions in 2013 sources. Following the critical history, Chapter Six is a musical analysis of *Hora Novissima*. Chapter Six is also fairly substantive, as there is no lengthy published analysis of this piece. Musical examples are included, and it is hoped that the salient features of each movement, and of the structure as a whole, are brought to the fore. The seventh and final chapter of the document will contain some conclusions and suggestions for further research. Following the concluding material and bibliography, an appendix detailing the rhythmic motives employed by Parker in the piece is included.

Limitations of the Study

This document will deal specifically with Horatio Parker's *Hora Novissima*, critical reception of the work, and analysis of its musical materials. While other pieces of his (and comparable works by his teachers, students, and contemporaries) may be touched upon as they relate to *Hora Novissima*, no attempt at a complete genealogy of the work will be attempted. Biographical information on Parker will be included for the convenience of conductors and scholars; a complete, book-length biography of Parker already exists,¹⁰ however, and need not be duplicated. A discussion of Bernard of Cluny's *De contemptu mundi* is essential for anyone studying *Hora Novissima*, and one will be included in this document. It will be comparatively brief, however, and scholars with serious interest in Bernard's poem will be directed to other resources. Musical analysis will present new points of view while building upon previous scholars' work. The listing of rhythmic motives will be presented (in the appendices) with information regarding their location within the work, but there will be no attempt at a complete hermeneutical analysis of the work based on its rhythmic content. Such a study, while fascinating, would be well beyond the scope of this paper.

It is sincerely hoped that limiting the scope of this document will increase its usefulness to scholars, particularly conductors interested in actually bringing the piece to life. *Hora Novissima* is, as Joseph Horowitz so pithily noted above, no Victorian corpse. Perhaps this study will contribute, in some small way, to a greater interest in studying, and more importantly performing, this fine work.

¹⁰ William K. Kearns, *Horatio W. Parker, 1863-1919: His Life, Music, and Ideas*, Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1990.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

While Parker's *magnum opus* is often mentioned in the literature, such references frequently seem limited to noting that *Hora Novissima* was popular in its day, that Parker was a competent, if a bit too Germanic, composer, and that the piece had its vogue and then passed into relative obscurity after the First World War. The composer is usually mentioned in one of two ways, neither of which present him as a significant artistic force in his own right: Parker is either portrayed as representative, with others, of the prevalent zeitgeist of Euro-centric New England Composers in the final decades of the 19th century or as foil to Charles Ives, the emblem of the tonal tyranny of European music that would be forever shattered by his student's influence. Discussions of Parker generally and *Hora Novissima* specifically are quite limited beyond that basic intersection of zeitgeist versus great man, which creates a strong need for further study of the composer and his works.

As this study is primarily concerned with a single, somewhat neglected, work, and its critical reception and history, the body of literature related specifically to its scope is narrow. Only the work of William Kearns, discussed below and at several other points within this study, has really touched upon *Hora Novissima* in any systematic way; his excellent brief analysis is the beginning point for any scholar or conductor wishing to study the piece.¹¹ Due to the otherwise overall paucity of scholarly interest in Parker's work and the nature of forging a history of critical and

¹¹ William K. Kearns, *Horatio Parker 1863-1919: A Study of His Life and Music*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois, 1965), 368-393.

popular reception to *Hora Novissima*, the literature employed in the creation of this document ranges fairly far afield from the usual dissertations and journal articles. Where these occur, they are included, but primary source material in the form of newspaper and other periodical articles,¹² general and genre-specific music history books, scholarly and less-than-so biographies of both Parker and his contemporaries, and sources specific to the poetry in *De contemptu mundi* (which provides *Hora Novissima*'s libretto) are utilized in the hope of creating a solid background of information designed to assist conductors interested in performing the work and scholars interested in studying it.

This chapter is organized according to the broad categories listed above, beginning with materials specific to Parker and his works, moving on to more general music and cultural history books and articles. Included in the first section is a listing of the contents of the basic categories of materials available in the Horatio Parker Papers, which are housed in the Irving S. Fine Music Library at Yale University. Biographies of some of Parker's contemporaries are included where they make mention of Parker or his work. The final portion of this chapter introduces sources that examine *De contemptu mundi* in different ways: as poetry, as historical artifact, and as textual source material for musical compositions. This last section also includes sources used to gather general information on poetic meter and its employment in *De contemptu mundi*.

¹² A great deal of primary source material, in particular an excellent collection of newspaper and periodical reviews of Parker's works, is housed at Yale University in the Horatio Parker Papers. Where information was gleaned from Yale's collection, the following indication is included in addition to the regular citation form: MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. The specific location, within the larger collection, will be indicated by box and folder numbers.

Materials Specific to Parker, His Life, and His Music

The preeminent scholar of the life and works of Horatio Parker is Dr. William K. Kearns, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Music in the College Music at the University of Colorado, Boulder. He is the author of the two most significant contributions to the literature concerning Parker, his 1965 Ph.D. dissertation *Horatio Parker 1863-1919: A Study of His Life and Music* and his 1990 biography of the composer, *Horatio Parker 1863-1919: His Life, Music, and Ideas*. The latter book is part of an excellent series called “Composers of North America,” published by The Scarecrow Press. Any serious study of Parker, indeed any serious study of late-19th century American music, finds an excellent starting place in these works. Although similar in title, the 1990 biography is expanded and updated in relation to the original dissertation in several significant ways, as a 1980 gift of Isabel Parker Semler, the composer’s daughter, to the library of Yale University gave Kearns (and other scholars) access to materials previously unavailable.¹³ Kearns’s assessment of Parker’s work also shifted in ways subtle and substantial in the 35 years between his dissertation and the publication of his book; use of both in conjunction provides a wealth of information essential to the study of the composer or his music. In addition to providing overall background and chronology, both the dissertation and the later biography contain discussions of *Hora Novissima* with regard to form, treatment of melodic motivic material, and a basic critical history of the work’s reception, particularly in the first

¹³ Kearns also notes that scholarship in American music in general experienced a significant uptick in the 1970s and 1980s; his newer views of Parker’s works are shaped, in part, by this growth in available information surrounding the totality of American music. William K. Kearns, *Horatio Parker 1863-1919: A Study of His Life, Music, and Ideas*, Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1990, xii.

decades after its composition.¹⁴ The section of Kearns's dissertation that deals specifically with the work is particularly useful, as it provides a somewhat lengthier discussion than the later biography. Both dissertation and book, however, are indispensable to Parker scholarship.

William Kearns further contributes to the literature concerning *Hora Novissima* in journal articles and liner notes for CDs; the material in these largely draws on his previously published books and articles. Without the constraints of formal academic writing, however, Kearns is free to infuse the jacket notes with his personal opinions. Notable is his reference to *Hora Novissima* as a "milestone in American cultivated music before World War I,"¹⁵ an opinion certainly borne out by Parker's contemporaries.

The other major biography of Parker was written and compiled by his daughter, Isabel Parker Semler, in 1940, initially as a way of presenting his grandchildren with a record of his life and accomplishments. *Horatio Parker: A Memoir for His Grandchildren Compiled from Letters and Papers* was published by G.P. Putnam's Sons in 1942. While Semler includes a significant amount of important information in her memoir, largely in the form of correspondence and newspaper notices, her memoir's real importance to Parker scholarship is in its presentation of the composer as human being. This portrayal must, of course, be taken with a grain of salt, as a loving daughter is hardly the most evenhanded of biographers. That said, Semler provides the first real

¹⁴ Ibid., 105-118, and Kearns, *Horatio Parker*, Ph.D. Diss., 368-393.

¹⁵ William K. Kearns, notes to *Abendmusik Chorus*, *Nebraska Wesleyan Chorus*, and *Nebraska Chamber Orchestra*, *Hora Novissima and Concerto in E-flat Minor for Organ and Orchestra* (1994), CD, Albany Records Troy 124-25.

in-depth study of her father. *Hora Novissima* is mentioned prominently in her narrative, but her focus is on the overall arc of Parker's life, rather than any analysis of his music. Semler's biography also provides the first multi-publisher catalogue of Parker's works.¹⁶ In addition to her biography, Semler's principal gift to scholarship concerning her father is in the collection of materials she amassed, which later become added to the collection of Parker materials gifted by his widow to Yale University's library.

The Irving S. Gilmore Music Library at Yale University is home to the largest collection of print and audio materials relating specifically to Horatio Parker's life, compositions, and academic career. These items are catalogued in the Horatio Parker Papers, established through a donation by the composer's widow, Ann Ploessl Parker, in 1923 and greatly expanded via gifts from Isabel Parker Semler, his daughter.¹⁷ The Gilmore Music Library provides an excellent overview of the contents of the Papers, which are fairly substantial for a composer traditionally considered to be of middling stature and historical importance:

The bulk of the Horatio Parker Papers was a gift from his wife, Anna Ploessl Parker, four years after his death. Eva J. O'Meara (Music Librarian at Yale, 1924-1952) writes: "Mrs. Parker, when she was about to leave New Haven in 1923, brought to Sprague Hall all the manuscripts left in Dr. Parker's possession at the time of his death. They were accepted as a gift to Yale University for the Library of the School of Music, and were formally acknowledged by the University Librarian in a letter of April 25, 1923. There were among them a few manuscripts that Mrs. Parker wished to be given to other persons or institutions; they were sent out as she desired." A preliminary arrangement of this gift was done by Miss O'Meara with the help of a few of the faculty members of the School of Music.

¹⁶ Isabel Parker Semler, *Horatio Parker: A Memoir for His Grandchildren, Compiled from Letters and Papers* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1942), 318-330.

¹⁷ Overview of the Horatio Parker Papers at Yale University.
<http://drs.library.yale.edu:8083/HLTransformer/HLTransServlet?style=yul.ead2002.xhtml.xsl&pid=music:mss.0032&clear-stylesheet-cache=yes> (2013), accessed 21 September 2013.

The remainder of the collection includes: a gift of two boxes of items from Mr. and Mrs. George Herbert Semler (1980 Oct 25); a gift of a few items from Isabel S. Curtis (1981 Aug); the purchase of a scrapbook belonging to Thomas Dwight Goodell (1977/78); and several items which were transferred from the Yale University Library and from the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library (1982 Mar). Any items which are not part of Mrs. Parker's initial gift have their provenance indicated on the item and/or folder. The greater part of the papers is comprised of musical works by Parker. There is a broad range of genres including: Choral Works; Opera and Incidental Music; Songs and Other Vocal Works; Anthems and Services; Keyboard Works; Orchestral and Chamber Music; and Miscellaneous Works. The music includes holographs as well as manuscripts in other hands and published works. The remainder of the papers contains correspondence, program, clippings, writings by Parker, biographical information, and miscellaneous items. There are occasionally cross-references between series.¹⁸

The contents of the Parker Papers, as of 2013, are divided in the following manner:

- I. Music
 - a. Choral Works
 - b. Opera and Incidental Music
 - c. Songs
 - d. Anthems and Services¹⁹
 - e. Keyboard Works
 - f. Orchestral and Chamber Music
 - g. Miscellaneous Works
- II. Correspondence
 - a. Correspondence from Parker to Others
 - b. Correspondence from Others to Parker
 - c. Correspondence Arranged by Topic
 - d. Correspondence with Publishers
 - e. Family Correspondence
 - f. Library Correspondence
- III. Programs
- IV. Clippings
 - a. Parker's Works and Performances
 - b. Articles by Parker
 - c. Obituaries of Parker
 - d. Biographical

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Services here refers to liturgical music written for the worship rites of the Episcopal Church. These include Anglican masses and Evensong (*Magnificat/Nunc dimittis*) settings.

- e. Scrapbooks
- V. Writings
 - a. Diaries and Jottings
 - b. Lectures
 - c. Papers, Addresses, Essays, etc.
- VI. Biographical Materials
 - a. Memorial Services, etc.
 - b. Bibliographical Materials and Librarian's Notes
 - c. Writings about Parker
 - d. The Gooddell Papers
 - e. The Semler Papers²⁰
- VII. Miscellaneous Items
 - a. Contracts, Agreements, and Royalty Statements
 - b. Photographs
 - c. Costume Designs
 - d. Memorabilia
- VIII. Sound Recordings²¹

Ex. 2.1 List of the contents of the Horatio Parker Papers at Yale University

Taken as a whole, the Parker Papers are an indispensable collection to any scholar of 19th-century American music. Currently, the bulk of the collection is only available on-site in the Gilmore Library in New Haven, Connecticut. Advances in technology will likely ensure that future researchers will have remote, digital access to the contents, but for now, anyone interested in Parker research will find a welcoming host at Yale.

For the purposes of this document, the sections of the Parker Papers containing correspondence, programs, newspaper clippings (particularly from media outlets no longer in existence or those that have no digital archives), and biographical information have proved most useful. Access to Parker's earliest diary entries provides a fascinating

²⁰ The Gooddell Papers and Semler Papers added to and expanded the initial gift of materials donated by Anna Ploessl Parker.

²¹ The sound recordings that are considered a part of the Parker Papers are now housed in a different facility than the rest of the collection. Scholars wishing to investigate them should contact the Gilmore Library staff well in advance, so that the recorded materials can be located.

glimpse into his mindset and his worldview. Reviews of numerous performances of *Hora Novissima*, while occasionally referenced in the works of Kearns and others, are really only collected in any serious way within the Parker Papers. His correspondence, particularly his letters to Chadwick and other influential musical contemporaries, is enlightening on its own and invaluable in suggesting other possible sources of information.

General History Books

A number of excellent general resources that deal either explicitly or tangentially with 19th-century American music are currently in print. Below is a survey of several of those resources. They are presented chronologically as a means of demonstrating how consistently unexamined Parker's work has been, and how often one generation's casual remark has the potential to become the next generation's truism. The earliest book resource included here dates from 1966; Parker's generation was examined in terms of its legacy more as the century progressed and living memory of composers and works faded. Earlier sources will certainly be examined and are mentioned in other sections of this chapter.

Gilbert Chase's *America's Music*,²² one of the first significant, well-researched, book-length treatments of the topic, introduces Parker in the fashion which would become most common in most writing about American art music: as part of a list of composers associated with late 19th-century New England.²³ Chase also presents the concept of Parker and his fellow New Englanders as "academicians" in such a way as to indicate a commonly held belief.²⁴ Chase, in a fairly lengthy treatment, includes carefully selected sentences from criticism of *Hora Novissima* to reinforce the concept of Parker as thief of others' ideas. He goes so far as to state that "several European masters could have legitimately signed their names to it,"²⁵ a position that may have more to do with the 20th-century obsession with musical individualism than it does with

²² Gilbert Chase, *America's Music*, Revised 2nd Edition (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966).

²³ *Ibid.*, 366.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 367.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 377.

any acknowledgement of 19th-century habits of borrowing. Chase also notes that the Boston classicists were “incapable of giving us” an American music free of European influence;²⁶ this is likely true, as Parker and his contemporaries had no desire to create such music. After a biographical sketch and brief mention of *Hora Novissima*, further mentions of Parker in *America’s Music* are confined to brief allusions of him in relation to his more well-known students, particularly Charles Ives.

H. Wiley Hitchcock’s introduction to the Music Library Association’s re-release of the score to *Hora Novissima* continues the theme of Parker as competent utilizer of European modes of communication, noting that Parker’s training by Rheinberger would have brought him into contact with the works of many European masters.²⁷ Hitchcock is somewhat more even in his treatment, writing that though *Hora Novissima* is a work of “undeniable eclecticism,” it is one that is “integrated by technical devices such as cyclic themes and also by a consistent atmosphere of German-American hymnic grandeur, solidity, and dignity.”²⁸ The 1972 publication of the full score to the work is itself a worthy addition to Parker scholarship.

Lawrence Levine’s seminal *Highbrow, Lowbrow* is an excellent study of what Levine terms the “sacralization” of art in America, particularly in the 19th century.²⁹ He describes the steady shift of music (and other forms of art) toward a museum culture of curating greatness and a performance culture of near-sacred experience, requiring the

²⁶ Ibid., 378.

²⁷ H. Wiley Hitchcock, Introduction to Horatio Parker, *Hora Novissima* (New York, Da Capo Press, 1972), n.p.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow, Lowbrow: the Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).

complete attention and devotion of the audience. For the purposes of this study, it is particularly interesting that Levine makes no mention of Horatio Parker or any other member of the Second New England School in his writing. The impact of those composers remains unmeasured, even in as fine a book as Levine's.

Returning to the motif of presenting Parker's name in a list of other, ostensibly similar, composers, Jack Sullivan's *New World Symphonies*, a study of the impact of American art (of all kinds) on European music, uses its sole mention of Parker in a description of participants whose works were featured on an American concert tour in 1910.³⁰ No mention is made of Parker's participation in the great English choral festivals or of any influence streams leading from New England back to Europe. For the purposes of this study, *New World Symphonies* is more useful for what it leaves out than for what it includes. Parker's world was, for some time, largely unexplored, which created gaps in understanding the evolution of American music during the course of the 20th century.

Horatio Parker is mentioned several times in Richard Crawford's *America's Musical Life: A History*, often in lists of musicians presented as representative of various facets of American music: organists, composers of sacred music, members of the Second New England School, and composers with German pedigrees.³¹ As is typical of other scholars, the other mentions of Parker are confined to noting his status as a conservative foil to Charles Ives's maverick spirit.³² Crawford does point out that

³⁰ Jack Sullivan, *New World Symphonies: How American Culture Changed European Music* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 39.

³¹ Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 297-8 and 352-8.

³² *Ibid.*, 498-9.

Parker's generation was responsible for the growth of music in the American academy; he also notes that that growth may have stunted the creative work of the New England School's composers.³³

Nicholas Tawa's 2001 book *From Psalm to Symphony: A History of Music in New England* provides, as its title might indicate, a bit more information on Parker's life and music than most non-Parker-specific sources. Tawa includes a 9-page discussion of Parker's life and works, making his one of the only history texts to include any significant mention of the composer.³⁴ Tawa is unique, too, in writing about Parker's personality and motivations, rather than concentrating on the more easily discussed elements of his musical style. Not surprisingly, his section on Parker draws heavily on the work of William Kearns and anecdotal material from the Isabel Parker Semler biography, reinforcing the important status of those works with regard to Parker studies. A common theme in Tawa's description of Parker's works is that of well-craftedness. Tawa notes that Parker's contemporaries considered him an excellent composer in his own right, and that his work, on its own merit, seems to hold up well to critical scrutiny.³⁵ Citing Parker's melodic writing as a particular strength, Tawa also notes a growth in the composer's employment of more adventurous sounds as his career progressed. Tawa finds much of worth in *Hora Novissima* in particular: although he gives other works their due, his discussion of the oratorio forms the longest single section of his writing on Parker. Tawa's references to a "warm lyricism" and a "candid

³³ Ibid., 499.

³⁴ Nicholas E. Tawa, *From Psalm to Symphony: A History of Music in New England* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2001), 171-9.

³⁵ Ibid., 171-3.

and honest” expression in the work indicate an admiration for Parker’s abilities as a composer. He notes that *Hora Novissima* is “indisputably Parker’s best work of art and an important addition to music literature.”³⁶ Perhaps the most telling compliment to the piece is a statement that “a master who put his strongest feelings into the music fashioned all the parts with skill and care”³⁷ when writing the work. Tawa may be the first serious scholar to refer to *Hora Novissima* in such glowing terms since Parker’s passing in 1919. While always impressed by Parker’s skill, however, Tawa also indicates perceived deficiencies in other works of Parker’s that may have contributed to his lack of staying power. The specter of the “academic composer,” unable to communicate to audiences in an attention-grabbing way is mentioned;³⁸ Tawa does not include, as do some other critics, *Hora Novissima* in this drier, more elitist vein, however. His mentions of Parker’s influences, Bach and Handel for counterpoint, Mendelssohn for melody, Liszt, Wagner, and Strauss for harmony, are introduced as influences only; while Tawa indicates these influences as evidence of a lack of anything “American” in Parker’s music, he does not seem to find the composer’s works to be particularly derivative.³⁹

Much like Nicholas Tawa, Joseph Horowitz provides greater insight into Parker than many earlier scholars. His descriptions of both Parker’s oft-mentioned relationship with Ives and *Hora Novissima*’s value indicate a shift toward a more even-handed critical attitude toward the elder composer. He notes, quite accurately, that

³⁶ Ibid., 176.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 177.

³⁹ Ibid., 172.

Parker is remembered almost exclusively as Ives's teacher, but Horowitz goes beyond the normal quotations from Ives regarding Parker's essential conservatism to bring to light this important statement from him concerning his teacher:

His choral works have dignity and depth that many contemporaries, especially in religious and choral compositions, do not have. Parker had ideals that carried him higher than the popular, but he was governed by the 'German rule.' Parker was a bright man, a good technician, but perfectly willing to be limited by what Rheinberger has taught him.⁴⁰

This quote is mentioned with some frequency in literature directly concerning Ives, but only the final sentence is generally referenced in earlier scholarship on Parker. Taken out of context, Ives seems to be offering up a harsh judgment of his teacher; presented with the full text, his opinion is clarified and moderated. He indicates respect for Parker's gifts, limited though he might find them. That opinion, borne out by Ives's early works in a style that can only be described as Parker-esque, is particularly interesting in light of Ives's later insistent iconoclasm. In fact, it seems to echo his views concerning several other, generally considered much greater, composers.

Horowitz's brief discourse on *Hora Novissima* also seems to indicate a more evenhanded view of Parker's work. He uses adjectives like fragrant, sonorous, fresh, and unexpected to describe the composition, a far cry from the accusations (echoing some of Ives's more famous commentary on Parker) of dry, academic writing. As with others before him, Horowitz notes the "good tunes" and the composer's firm grasp on orchestral color before concluding that "*Hora Novissima* is no Victorian corpse" and

⁴⁰ Joseph Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, 1st Paperback Edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007), 99.

that a “potent present-day performance would startle even nonbelievers.”⁴¹ Following that, Horowitz retreats a bit, noting that Parker’s works would be a stretch for 21st-century tastes.⁴² Horowitz also briefly suggests that Parker’s influence on Ives was deeper than the younger composer was willing to admit, citing (without examples) a melding of European influences in even his most “American” scores.⁴³

Alex Ross, the influential classical music critic for the *New Yorker*, makes some mention of Parker in his book *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*. While Ross also indicates that Parker was likely a more influential (and better) teacher than the Ives myth allows,⁴⁴ he does not treat Parker as an important composer of the early 20th century, preferring to simply list him as a not-American-enough member of the Second New England school, competent and a “credit to [his] European training.”⁴⁵

The venerable *A History of Western Music*, currently in its eighth edition, mentions Parker in its brief section on nascent American nationalism in the later 19th century, largely as an example of a composer uninterested in specifically “American” music; Burkholder *et al* note that Parker (and most his New England colleagues) was more interested in writing in a universal style, rooted in the demonstrable example of successful European models.⁴⁶ *Hora Novissima* is mentioned as an example of this universality of style. The rehabilitation of Parker’s image as a teacher of composition is

⁴¹ Ibid., 100.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 236.

⁴⁴ Alex Ross, *The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007), 130.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 26.

⁴⁶ J. Peter Burkholder and others, *A History of Western Music*, 8th Edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), 26.

continued in *A History*: the authors acknowledge a “sharpening” of Ives’s craft under Parker’s tutelage.⁴⁷ Both Ross, mentioned immediately above, and the authors of *A History of Western Music* mention Ives’s cantata *The Celestial Country* as a turning point in that composer’s move away from music as a career.⁴⁸ This ties directly into his training with Parker, as *The Celestial Country* was based on the same poem as *Hora Novissima* and was formally quite similar to the older work.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 847.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 848.

Genre-Specific History Books

Following a short biography placing Parker's music squarely in the "German tradition,"⁴⁹ Jonathan Green, in his *Conductor's Guide to Nineteenth-Century Choral-Orchestral Works*, makes mention of Parker as a gifted teacher of some of the most creative composers of the first half of the 20th century. Green's discussion of *Hora Novissima* is driven more by factual information than critical opinion, but he does repeat the earlier suggestion of the work being "consistently appealing, if not always inspiring."⁵⁰ He also finds the melodic content unmemorable and the piece, on the whole, conventional, but mildly interesting. This is a significant step up from Green's earlier book, 1994's *A Conductor's Guide to Choral-Orchestral Works*, which makes no mention of *Hora Novissima* at all (and, in fact, includes no representative American work written before Randall Thomspson's 1932 piece *Americana*).⁵¹

Nick Strimple's excellent *Choral Music in the Nineteenth Century* has, as is to be expected in a survey of so broad a topic, only a few paragraphs on Parker's works. Strimple cites Parker's inability to create a signature style as a possible reason for his fall from popularity, but he does find *Hora Novissima* to be an impressive work, worthy of more performances than it currently receives.⁵² He refers to Parker's style at the time of *Hora Novissima*'s composition as "Eurocentric" as a point of fact, but refrains from any judgment as to the validity of such a style in an American composer. Strimple also

⁴⁹ Jonathan Green, *A Conductor's Guide to Nineteenth-Century Choral-Orchestral Works* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2008), 231.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁵¹ Jonathan Green, *A Conductor's Guide to Choral-Orchestral Works* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1994), v-ix.

⁵² Nick Strimple, *Choral Music in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Amadeus Press, 2008), 207.

notes Parker's contrapuntal mastery, echoing many of the earliest critics of *Hora Novissima*.⁵³

Hora Novissima is referred to as “without a doubt the most famous large-scale choral/orchestral American work of the Romantic era” in Dennis Shrock's brief discussion of Parker in his fine reference book *Choral Repertoire*.⁵⁴ He, too refrains from stating a firm critical opinion, save to note that the work was immediately popular. Shrock also notes that although it has become normal to refer to the piece as an oratorio, Parker himself used the term cantata and *Hora Novissima* lacks recitatives and the storyline typical of Victorian oratorios.⁵⁵

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Dennis Shrock, *Choral Repertoire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 554.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 555.

Biographies of Contemporaries

While not specific to Parker scholarship, a brief survey of some of the leading biographical accounts of some of his closest contemporaries will help place him more clearly in the context of his era. Due to the specific goals of this document, only biographies of Chadwick, Parker's most influential friend and one of his more significant teachers, Ives, his most famous student, and some closely associated colleagues were consulted. Those wishing to explore more deeply Parker's life and relationships would do well to seek out information on Arthur Foote, Arthur Farwell, Daniel Gregory Mason, Amy Beach, Edward MacDowell, Josef Rheinberger, and the leading composers of late 19th-century English oratorio.

There are two excellent biographies of George Whitefield Chadwick: Victor Fell Yellin's 1990 *Chadwick: Yankee Composer* and Bill Faucett's *George Whitefield Chadwick: The Life and Music of the Pride of New England*, published in 2012. Both are treasure troves of information regarding Parker's relationship with his mentor and close friend. Neither, however, makes any mention of *Hora Novissima*, which was written and premiered during Parker's time in New York City, before his return to New England. From a biographical perspective, seeing Parker through the lens of his relationship to Chadwick fleshes out his life, as demonstrated by an anecdote concerning Parker and Chadwick drinking to excess⁵⁶ (seemingly out of character for the younger composer) and a letter of Chadwick's, written late in life, that nostalgically

⁵⁶ Bill F. Faucett, *George Whitefield Chadwick: The Life and Music of the Pride of New England* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2012), 237.

recalls Parker as “bringing with [him] more than [he] carried away” from his studies with Chadwick.⁵⁷

There are decent biographies of some of Parker’s other contemporaries, including Adrienne Fried Block’s *Amy Beach: Passionate Victorian*, an excellent resource on Beach’s life. Nicholas Tawa wrote a solid biography of Foote, *Arthur Foote: A Musician in the Frame of Time and Place*, which also mentions Parker tangentially. This biography stands alongside Foote’s autobiography, which would also be of use to a scholar studying Parker. No book-length treatment of Arthur Whiting exists as of this writing. There is also no English-language complete biography of Rheinberger; the German *Josef Rheinberger: Werk und Wirkung* focuses on his work and influences, but largely in the context of his life as a composer. As Rheinberger’s place in Parker’s life was well before *Hora Novissima*’s composition, the work is not mentioned in *Werk und Wirkung*. None of the biographies of Parker’s contemporaries makes significant mention of *Hora Novissima*; the information gleaned from them would be more relevant to a biographical study than it is to this document, but they serve to provide context for Parker’s compositional world.

The literature concerning Charles Ives is vast, and it would be well beyond the parameters of this document to delve too deeply into it, but a few fairly recent representative resources may prove useful in studying *Hora Novissima*, given Ives’s admiration for the work as evidenced in his composition *The Celestial Country*.

⁵⁷ Victor Fell Yellin, *Chadwick: Yankee Composer* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), 47.

A Charles Ives Omnibus, the most complete published collection of Ives's correspondence and other source material, is a fine starting place for anyone wishing to delve more deeply into Ives's life and work. Perhaps not surprisingly, Parker does not feature prominently in Ives's letters, especially those written after the latter's time at Yale. *Hora Novissima* is not mentioned at all, although *The Celestial Country* has a few scattered references. The student/teacher relationship between the two men finds a typical expression in Ives's account of an 1897 organ fugue, written at the behest of Parker. Ives describes the work as "a stupid fugue on a stupid subject."⁵⁸ The *Omnibus* also includes references to Ives's admiration for Parker⁵⁹ and some speculation regarding Parker's influence on his student's later compositions.⁶⁰ The only other mention of Parker is in the cast listing for the 1976 film *Charles Ives: A Good Dissonance Like a Man*, which featured actor Bob McIlwain as the elder composer (likely the only film portrayal of Parker).⁶¹

Selected Correspondence of Charles Ives, published in 2007, features fewer citations than the *Omnibus* but more complete texts from Ives's letters. The most interesting Parker-related material in the *Correspondence* involves an exchange of letters between Ives and an old New Haven friend, John Griggs, who was teaching in China in the early 1920s. Ives reveals his foremost complaint regarding Parker: that his mind and heart did not work together in the creation of music – in essence, the accusation of excessive academicism so often leveled at Parker in the 20th century.⁶²

⁵⁸ James Mack Burk, *A Charles Ives Omnibus* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2008), 305.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 229.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 824.

⁶² Tom C. Owens, ed., *Selected Correspondence of Charles Ives* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 72-4.

Further complicating the Parker/Ives relationship, there is a short letter, dated November 11, 1949, from Isabel Parker Semler, the composer's daughter, to Ives's wife, thanking her for her hospitality during a visit. This is the only extant correspondence between the two families; it includes mention of the gift of a score from Parker's widow to Ives, a clear indication of mutual respect, if not admiration.⁶³

As its title might indicate, *Charles Ives Reconsidered* presents a portrait of Ives as somewhat more human than the deified image popular in the late 20th century would indicate. This reassessment may go far in rehabilitating Parker's image: if Ives is more than archetypal iconoclast, perhaps Parker is more than a symbol of the unbending academy. As with other Ives sources, Parker features most prominently in the biographical narrative of the younger composer's life. *Ives Reconsidered*, however, also includes specific references to *Hora Novissima*, making it a somewhat more useful source in relationship to this study. Author Gayle Sherwood Magee offers a solid discussion of the work:⁶⁴ while it provides little new information, its place in a biography of Ives subtly moves its function beyond typical Parker criticism.

⁶³ Ibid., 347-8.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 40-2.

General Poetry Sources

The basic form of *Hora Novissima*, on both macro and micro levels, is determined by the poetic meter and textual content of Bernard of Cluny's *De contemptu mundi*. For understanding the former, almost any basic poetry textbook will be of use. The meaning of text as employed in medieval Latin poetry is a much more particular area of study, requiring more specific resources. Both general poetry sources and articles specific to *De contemptu mundi* are employed in this document.

Four general poetry sources provide a solid background in meter and poetic form: Paul Fussell, Jr.'s *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form*, X.J. Kennedy's *An Introduction to Poetry*, M.H. Abrams's *Glossary of Literary Terms*, and Jeff Knorr's *An Introduction to Poetry: The River Sings*. Of these, Paul Fussell's book is the oldest and, for the purposes of this study, the most useful. His discussion of meter is of particular use.⁶⁵ The *Glossary of Literary Terms* provides excellent, brief descriptions of poetic meters in a language easily digested by the lay reader; Abrams's discussion of dactylic hexameter (the meter of *De contemptu mundi*) is excellent.⁶⁶ *An Introduction to Poetry* contains a similarly useful outline of meter.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Paul Fussell, Jr., *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form* (New York: Random House, 1965), 3-36.

⁶⁶ M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 5th Ed., (New York: Holy, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1988), 102-3.

⁶⁷ X.J. Kennedy, *An Introduction to Poetry*, 6th Ed., (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1986), 148-9.

Sources Specific to *De contemptu mundi*

Sources more specific to *De contemptu mundi* and the Latin poetry of the medieval church abound.⁶⁸ There is an especially large collection of such materials dating from the turn of the last century. The growth in research on the medieval era coincided with a significant uptick in popular interest in all things chivalrous, as evidenced by the numerous pseudo-medieval poems, artworks, and musical compositions so prevalent during the late 19th century. Serious study of the Abbey of Cluny, of its abbot, and of its monk Bernard (the poet of *De contemptu mundi*) was a part of this spirit, and there are several wonderful sources regarding *De contemptu mundi* and the medieval worldview surrounding it that date from this period. While scholarly opinion regarding meaning in medieval religious poetry has evolved over the past century, older sources provide an ideological framework for *Hora Novissima*, perhaps explaining Parker's choices regarding which portions of the lengthy poem to set. The first sources listed below date from within a generation, in either direction, of *Hora Novissima*'s creation and premiere. Following this survey of older writing will be a chronological examination of more recent sources pertaining to *De contemptu mundi*.

It is quite possible that without John Mason Neale's abridged and stylized translation of *De contemptu mundi*,⁶⁹ Horatio Parker's signature work would not exist. Neale's 1867 paraphrase of the first section of Bernard's epic poem was the source of many 19th-century hymns, notably *Jerusalem the Golden*, and Parker would have

⁶⁸ *De contemptu mundi* is the Latin poem that provides the text for *Hora Novissima*. For a discussion of the poem, including several translations, see Chapter IV of this document.

⁶⁹ John Mason Neale, Tr., *Bernard de Morlaix, Monk of Cluny, on the Celestial Country* (New York: H.B. Durand, 1867).

undoubtedly been well aware of this translation through his work in the Episcopal church and his mother's strong interest in Latin verse. Another, later versified translation of the first few lines of *De contemptu mundi* can be found in James Heartt Van Buren's 1904 collection *Latin Hymns in English Verse*. While only a brief section (some six lines of the original Latin) is translated, the principal interest in Van Buren's book lies in its equally brief (and now generally considered inaccurate) biography of Bernard. Published more than a decade after the premiere of *Hora Novissima*, Van Buren's work likely represents the scholarly consensus of the era of the musical work's composition.⁷⁰

Henry Preble's *The Source of Jerusalem the Golden* represents the first real attempt at a scholarly translation of portions of *De contemptu mundi*. The popularity of the hymns drawn from Neale's earlier paraphrase can be attested to by Preble's choice of title. While the preface to this set of translations, written by editor Samuel Macauley Jackson, insists that Preble's work represents a complete translation of Bernard's poem, only the first book of the poem is translated, with other works attributed to Bernard. It is useful to compare the work of Neale, Parker's mother, and Preble, however, because *Hora Novissima*'s libretto is drawn exclusively from the first book, as well. *The Source of Jerusalem the Golden* contains facsimiles of the original 12th-century manuscript to the poem, a boon to any scholar of the work.⁷¹

⁷⁰ James Heartt Van Buren, *Latin Hymns in English Verse* (Boston: Old Corner Book Store, 1904), 123.

⁷¹ Henry Preble and Samuel Macauley Jackson, *The Source of Jerusalem the Golden Together with Other Pieces Attributed to Bernard of Cluny, in English Translation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1910), N.P.

George Cross makes a brief reference to *De contemptu mundi* in a 1912 article for *The Biblical World*. The purpose of the article is to create a basic summary of medieval Catholic doctrine on eternal life, which is the principal theme of Bernard's poem. Pessimism regarding the inhabitants of this life is contrasted starkly with the glorious life of the future inhabitants of the heavenly kingdom.⁷² Cross's understanding of the medieval worldview would have been similar to ideas on the subject at the time of *Hora Novissima*'s composition and can provide a glimpse into Parker's choice of text. Cross wrote a later article for the same journal, again making brief mention of *De contemptu mundi* and again discussing the conflicting worlds of the New Jerusalem and the sullied earth.⁷³

The most useful contemporary resource regarding the poem is Ronald Pepin's 1991 translation of the entire work (nearly 3000 lines). This translation eschews earlier attempts at shoehorning the original hexametric text into similarly metered English verse in favor of a prose-based, more idiomatic rendering.⁷⁴ Pepin's excellent work will enable readers to have a fuller understanding of Bernard's occasionally tortured verse, especially when presented side-by-side with earlier translations.

⁷² George Cross, "The Mediaeval Catholic Doctrine of the Future Life," in *The Biblical World* Vol. 39, No. 3 (March 1912), 188-199.

⁷³ George Cross, "Rival Interpretations of Christianity II: Mysticism," in *The Biblical World* Vol. 49, No. 2 (February, 1917), 98.

⁷⁴ Ronald Pepin, *Scorn for the World: Bernard of Cluny's De Contemptu Mundi. The Latin Text with English Translation and an Introduction* (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1991).

Summary

Available sources that deal specifically, and at length, with *Hora Novissima* in a truly thorough way do not, as of this time, exist. Materials used to study the work must therefore be compiled from a mixture of primary source materials (scores, contemporary newspaper articles and reviews, correspondence, diaries, etc.), brief allusions to the work in the academic literature, and tangential items concerning Parker's life and works, the original poem itself, and other resources gathered from various disciplines. It is hoped that by collecting this information in one volume, scholarship on *Hora Novissima* and its creator will be advanced.

CHAPTER III

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF HORATIO W. PARKER

Horatio William Parker, known to his inner circle as Will, was born in Auburndale, Massachusetts on September 15, 1863. The year of his birth makes him roughly contemporary with an extraordinary assortment of influential composers, ranging from Mahler, Albeniz, Delius, and Debussy (all born just prior to Parker) to Strauss, Glazunov, Nielsen, Sibelius, and Scott Joplin (all born just after him). Many of these composers are closely associated with some sort of significant school or generally agreed upon point of view: impressionism, nationalism, post-romanticism. So, too, was Parker, as a member of the Second New England School of composers, with his elder contemporary George Whitefield Chadwick as its dean. Parker's path to that position of prominence as a composer, and to an equally elevated place as an academic, was in many ways less exciting, and certainly less dramatic, than the biographies of other noted composers (particularly the spectacular peregrinations of Delius and the almost unbelievable early years of Mahler). This comfort, this lack of apparent pathos, which dates from his early years in an upper middle class New England home, might be considered a calling card of his musical style – in stark contrast to many of the composers listed above.

Early Life

Like his mentor and friend Chadwick, while there was little in Parker's early life to indicate a special proclivity for music as a future profession, he was surrounded by fine amateur music making as a child. As a sometime organist, pianist, and teacher, his mother exerted the strongest early influence on his musical growth. Isabella Graham Jennings Parker was well educated in the classics, having served as Class Poet of the graduating class of 1857 at Lasell Female Seminary; this background served her son well in later years, as she created translations from medieval Latin to English for several of his works, most notably *Hora Novissima*.⁷⁵ The composer's daughter Isabel Parker Semler, recalled her grandmother spending hours reading the Bible in both Greek and Latin; an assumption can be made that her reading interests extended far enough to introduce classic Latin poetry to her eldest son.⁷⁶

Both of Parker's parents were old-stock New Englanders, and he could trace (with no small amount of pride) his ancestry to 17th-century English settlers.⁷⁷ His father Charles Edward Parker, a widower with four children from an earlier marriage, was an architect whose work, especially church and civic edifices, can still be seen throughout New England. The elder Parker and his second wife also has four children (including Will), creating a large family of ten (not all in residence at Auburndale at any

⁷⁵ William K. Kearns, *Horatio W. Parker: His Life, Music, and Ideas*, Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1990, 3.

⁷⁶ Isabel Parker Semler, *Horatio Parker: A Memoir for His Grandchildren Compiled from Letters and Papers*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1942, 22.

⁷⁷ For a genealogical sketch of both the Parkers and the Jennings, see Semler, *Horatio Parker*, 303.

given time) plus Isabella's sister, Alice Jennings, who assisted with the running of the household.⁷⁸

Horatio Parker's daughter uses an October, 1875 letter from Charles to his son to illustrate the typical strictness of a New England family of moderate means and a religious bent:

Dear William:

You are left at Keene alone, and I beg you to remember you have the honor of the family in your keeping.

Be faithful and diligent, learn all you can and be very considerate and obedient to Patty...

Act reverently in church, and remember that you are watched very closely by others, and above all remember the eye of God is ever on you. Don't neglect to pray to Him and ever ask His help in the smallest things. He is your Father ever faithful, kind and always able to do what you need as I cannot... Remember people will judge your mother and me by your conduct. Above all *act* right because it *is* right.

Affectionately,
Your Father⁷⁹

While a staunch Episcopalian for his entire life, the Calvinist severity of an earlier New England seems evident in Parker's upbringing. There can be little doubt that the ordered, proscribed life of that quiet, "green, though stony little region"⁸⁰ and of a strict, though undoubtedly affectionate childhood had a significant impact on Parker as both man and composer. The God-divined rhythms of church and home could easily find expression in the work of a composer who became one of the expert contrapuntists of his day.

⁷⁸ Alice Jennings lost her hearing due to a bout of Scarlet Fever suffered as a child, but still had a significant influence on her nephew's career due to her skill in German translation.

⁷⁹ Semler, *Horatio Parker*, 25.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

Somewhat oddly, given his family background, there is little evidence of Parker's early schooling, and what clues still exist point to an indifferent, though bright, student who chafed a bit under the strictures of formal schooling.⁸¹ During his later years, especially when surrounded by the intellectual firepower of Yale University's faculty, Parker would carry some regret concerning his lack of formal (read: university) education.

As to his education in music, its roots form one of the most oft-repeated anecdotes about Parker's life, here recollected by his mother:

In the month of October, 1877, Horatio suddenly began to take an interest in music, to ask all sorts of questions about it, and to spend literally whole days at the piano, beginning at daylight, and stopping only when his father sent him to bed, perhaps at 11 p.m. From this time onwards he had but one object. Sports and recreation were left out of his life, and the necessary education was with great difficulty imparted in the intervals of music study.⁸²

Isabella took on his instruction, and was encouraged enough at his progress and determination to have a set of organ pedals installed in the family's Auburndale home to facilitate Will's learning. By the time he was 16, Parker was accompanying hymns at a local Episcopal church (which apparently, he learned by memory; his late start at the instrument meant that his reading skills were, for a time, subpar),⁸³ and shortly thereafter he began more formal study in composition under the tutelage of George Whitefield Chadwick, only nine years his senior but already well-established in Boston musical circles.⁸⁴ In Boston, Parker also studied piano with John Orth and theory with

⁸¹ This pattern would continue in Parker's later life, when he would be considered a gifted, but challenging, student of both Chadwick and Rheinberger.

⁸² From a 1902 interview in the *Musical Times*, quoted in Kearns, *Horatio Parker: Life, Music, and Ideas*, 5.

⁸³ Semler, *Horatio Parker*, 34.

⁸⁴ Chadwick's rise to prominence and his overall impact on New England's is examined in Bill Faucett's excellent 2012 study, *George Whitefield Chadwick: The Life and Music of the Pride of New England*, published by Northeastern University Press.

Stephen Emery,⁸⁵ continuing both his musical development and his streak of discontent with the formalities of Victorian music instruction. While noting that he possessed excellent abilities in harmony and modulation, fine melodic ideas, and an already noticeable individuality in his compositional style, Chadwick, later a close friend as well as a mentor, describes his star pupil thus:

He was far from docile. In fact, he was impatient of the restrictions of musical form and rather rebellious of the discipline of counterpoint and fugues. But he was very industrious and did his work faithfully and well. His lessons usually ended with him swallowing his medicine, but with many a wry grimace.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Parker indicated that he studied with W.F. Apthorp, later a noted critic, as well, but these three seem to have formed the basis for his Boston training.

⁸⁶ George Whitefield Chadwick, *Commemorative Tribute to Horatio Parker*, New Haven: Yale University Press/American Academy of Arts and Letters, 1922, 4. This address was originally presented at a meeting of the American Academy in 1920.

Germany and Study with Rheinberger

Following in his mentor's footsteps, and with his encouragement, Parker sailed for Europe in June of 1882 to begin studies at the *Königliche Musikhochschule* in Munich. His teacher, for both organ and composition, was Josef Gabriel Rheinberger. Parker had initially intended to study with Joachim Raff at Frankfurt, but that composer's death necessitated the change to Munich. Chadwick had studied briefly with Rheinberger and had been impressed; it is to be assumed that he assisted Parker in making his final choice of school.

Chadwick marked Parker's study with Rheinberger as the end of his rebelliousness to formal study, noting that from his time in Munich Parker "showed the greatest respect for fineness of detail and the keenest appreciation of the niceties."⁸⁷ Parker excelled in the conservatory environment, and became a prize student in both organ and composition. Parker played the premiere of his teacher's Op. 137 organ concerto, and was awarded a diploma⁸⁸ in both fields of study.⁸⁹

While Parker's three-year sojourn in Bavaria had a significant effect on his discipline and knowledge as a composer, and, indeed, gave him great encouragement as he turned for the first time to the choral milieu that would lead to his fame, he was quick to downplay German influence on his overall compositional style. He preferred to acknowledge his time at the *Hochschule* as "a development of the seeds sown by his

⁸⁷ Semler, *Horatio Parker*, 60.

⁸⁸ The composer's daughter indicates that Parker never received the physical diploma to which he was entitled, being apparently rather anxious to return home to America. Semler, *Horatio Parker*, 69.

⁸⁹ Neither conservatory nor university study in this era led to a guaranteed diploma or other public recognition; students were tested thoroughly, and only a certain proportion of them were awarded diplomas or admitted to degrees.

American teachers which contained most of the germs of art truth.”⁹⁰ Given the later critical accusations of Parker as a mere imitator of better German (and later, English) composers, it is interesting to discover that the composer thought of his most significant ideological influences as being Chadwick and his other early teachers in Boston. Parker also, in keeping with his lifelong opinion that he was undereducated, felt that he should have studied in France in addition to his German sojourn.⁹¹ Neither Germany nor France would exert the pull on him that England would in his later life, however, and his music might be more closely aligned with an Anglo-American school than with any of the music of the continent.

A brief anecdote, repeated in several sources that discuss Parker’s student days, may illumine his time in Munich. Apparently, Parker developed a tendency to leave some of his work, especially theory and counterpoint exercises, until the last minute – quite literally: Rheinberger once encounter him drying the ink on a just-completed exercise over the classroom stove. It would appear that Parker’s early distaste for the methodology of composition pedagogy had not completely disappeared. Rheinberger, probably quite aptly, noted that Parker could stop holding the work over the heat, that the writing was probably already “dry enough.”⁹² Parker’s resistance to norms and Rheinberger’s playful reaction (some *Hochschule* students saw his reactions to Parker’s coloring outside the lines as tacit endorsement)⁹³ belie later critical opinion of Parker’s work as either particularly academic or exceedingly derivative.

⁹⁰ William Kearns, *Horatio W. Parker 1863-1919: A Study of His Life and Music*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois, 1965, 50.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Kearns, *Horatio Parker: Life, Music, and Ideas*, 9.

⁹³ Ibid.

Following his student years and before his love affair with Britain began, Parker found love of a different sort. A year after coming back to the United States to begin his professional career in 1885, he returned to Munich to marry fellow *Hochschule* student Anna Ploessl on August 9, 1886.⁹⁴ True to the customs of the day, the new bride forsook the music career for which her conservatory studies in piano had prepared her and created what was, by all contemporary accounts, a life of “domestic tranquility, happiness and a mutual dependence and respect,”⁹⁵ one that only ended with the composer’s passing in 1919. The Parkers had four children: three girls, all of whom grew to adulthood and had families of their own, and one boy, William, who died shortly after his birth in 1891.

⁹⁴ Semler, *Horatio Parker*, 70.

⁹⁵ Kearns, *Horatio Parker: Life, Music, and Ideas*, 13.

New York and Early Career

Parker's career path followed a route still recognizable to those who work in the academy today: after briefly attempting to live as a private studio instructor and composer in Boston, he took a position as a music teacher at St. Paul's School in Garden City, New York;⁹⁶ at the same time, he was engaged as organist of St. Luke's Church in Brooklyn.⁹⁷ He moved to other church positions, including St. Andrew's in Harlem (for only one year) and the Church of the Holy Trinity in midtown Manhattan.⁹⁸ Parker remained at Holy Trinity until his departure for Boston and a new appointment at Trinity Church, Copley Square, in 1893.⁹⁹ During this time, Parker remained active as a teacher and composer, all the while becoming more prominent in the latter field. His student compositions received some American performances as early as 1886, when Frank Van der Stucken¹⁰⁰ conducted Parker's Opus 13 *Scherzo* at a New York City concert.¹⁰¹ These early works and connections brought him some notoriety, and undoubtedly increased his level of confidence. Parker's first major prize came during this early era: his cantata *The Dream King and His Love* took first prize in the cantata division of the National Conservatory's 1892 composition contest. This led to a March 31, 1893 performance of the piece before the New York critics, who were more impressed with it than they were with the other prizewinning works featured on the

⁹⁶ The money earned from his first year of employment there paid for his wedding trip back to Munich. Semler, *Horatio Parker*, 72.

⁹⁷ No official record of his service there exists, but there is little reason to doubt his (or his family's) recollection.

⁹⁸ Kearns, *Horatio Parker: Life, Music, and Ideas*, 13.

⁹⁹ For at least some of his tenure at Holy Trinity, and although he was generally classified as a baritone, Parker's tenor soloist was Harry T. Burleigh. Kearns, *Horatio Parker: Life, Music, and Ideas*, 14.

¹⁰⁰ It is thought that Parker's foray into writing German-language male chorus music during this era was due to his association with Van der Stucken, who conducted German singing societies in addition to his symphonic conducting career. Kearns, *Horatio Parker: Study of His Life and Music*, Ph.D. diss., 70.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

concert.¹⁰² Parker worked on *The Dream King and His Love* alongside *Hora Novissima*, which saw its premiere in New York on May 3, 1893. The near ecstatic early response to *Hora Novissima* is treated in depth below, in Chapter V.

Parker's New York successes were marred by tragedy, however: within the space of one year, from August of 1890 to July of 1891, as he was sketching and composing both cantatas, he suffered the deaths of his father, son, grandmother, and youngest sister and in rapid succession. His health began to deteriorate around his 30th birthday, with his diary frequently mentioning various ailments from 1892 on.¹⁰³ The rapid succession of works written, published, and premiered in the early 1890s belies no flagging of energy in the composer, regardless of his health (physical or emotional). The impact of such great loss, however, may be echoed in the impassioned hopefulness of eternal joy found in *Hora Novissima*, a work dedicated to Parker's father.

It was also in New York that Parker began his career in musical academia, first teaching basic musicianship to aspiring clergy at the General Theological Seminary in New York in early 1892 and then offering coursework in harmony at the National Conservatory for the academic year 1892-93.¹⁰⁴ 1892 marked the first year of Antonin Dvořák's tenure as director of the conservatory, but while Parker performed at the organ for a concert to honor the new director,¹⁰⁵ there seems to be little to indicate any real personal interaction between the two men.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Kearns, *Horatio Parker: Life, Music, and Ideas*, 18.

¹⁰³ Kearns, *Horatio Parker: Study of His Life and Music*, Ph.D. diss., 73.

¹⁰⁴ His pay was about \$80.00 per month, enough to indicate what Kearns describes as a "substantial activity," and a fairly prestigious one. Kearns, *Horatio Parker: Life, Music, and Ideas*, 17.

¹⁰⁵ The piece was the *Te Deum*, Op. 103. Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

Parker's decision to move north to accept the organist/choirmaster position was, at least in part, a reaction to a surge in Oxford-movement style worship in the New York churches, especially in the form of choirs of men and boys. Throughout his career,¹⁰⁷ he spoke and wrote at length concerning the use of choirs at worship; he maintained a consistent position that mixed-gender choirs (and not the dreaded professional "quartet choirs" en vogue in the late 19th century) were both easier to work with and more appropriate to the worship setting than their younger counterparts.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ The Parker Papers at Yale maintain a significant collection of the composer's articles and speeches, many of which concern the direction and style of church music.

¹⁰⁸ Kearns, *Horatio Parker: Life, Music, and Ideas*, 20.

Yale University

Parker worked for only a year at his new post before his appointment to the position that would define the rest of his career. In May of 1894, he was appointed Battell Professor of Music at Yale University, a position he would hold for the remainder of his life. His influence on the Department of Music at Yale is incalculable: the academic study of music at that institution traces its real roots to his tenure there. He worked to expand course offerings for those specializing in music, but also introduced coursework in music history designed for the general student population. His music history class had enrollments of as many as 70 students in any given semester – an early (and significantly more difficult, as the remaining lectures in the Parker Papers attest) precursor to the Music Appreciation courses of later eras.

While at Yale, Parker also assisted in the founding of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra, bringing it, in the words of Yale Professor William Lyon Phelps, “from unavoidable amateurishness to professional excellence.”¹⁰⁹ He also founded a women’s chorus, Euterpe,¹¹⁰ at Yale, and later, from 1907, conducted (by commuting weekly to Philadelphia!) both the Eurydice Chorus (a women’s group) and the Orpheus Club (a men’s chorus). Through much of his time at Yale, Parker was also still engaged at Holy Trinity, and travelled to Boston to discharge his duties there at least weekly for significant portions of the year.

¹⁰⁹ Semler, *Horatio Parker*, 93.

¹¹⁰ Named for the Greek muse who is charged with giving delight.

Later Works and Life

Although his schedule remained strenuous until just before his death in 1919, Parker found time for both travel (several times to both England and Germany, almost always in conjunction with a performance of his works) and composition, turning out several more large-scale choral works, including the oratorio *The Legend of St. Christopher* and *A Wanderer's Psalm* (the latter written for the Three Choirs Festival at Hereford of 1900), both of which require forces similar to those of *Hora Novissima* and both of which show a high degree of contrapuntal skill. These works also show a more adventurous side to Parker's writing, a shift away from what critics point to as a conservative streak in his earlier works.¹¹¹

His two operas continue the trend toward a broader tonal and melodic palette, and Parker spoke publicly about his admiration for the work of Wagner and, later, of Strauss. His first opera, *Mona*, won the \$10,000 prize offered by the Metropolitan Opera for an opera by an American composer. The work was premiered in 1912, loved by the audience, disliked by the critics, and dropped from the repertoire almost immediately. It has not been revived, although many who encounter it speak well of it. His second opera, *Fairyland*, won another \$10,000 prize, this one offered by the National Federation of Music Clubs. It, too, was well received by audiences at its 1915 premiere at the Los Angeles World's Fair,¹¹² but was not performed again following its initial, brief, run. A shorter work for solo baritone and orchestra, the 1895 *Cáhal Mór*

¹¹¹ *St. Christopher*, in particular, also shows a great awareness of the employment of something akin to *leitmotif*. See William Kearns's discussion of the piece in *Horatio Parker: Life, Music and Ideas*, 118-125.

¹¹² Semler, *Horatio Parker*, 247.

of the Wine Red Hand has proven more popular, as attested to by several extant recordings of the piece, the most recent from 2008.

Parker's instrumental compositions were many, especially given his close identification with the choral and church music worlds.¹¹³ His most performed instrumental works are the orchestral tone poem *A Northern Ballad*, from 1899, and his 1903 *Organ Concerto*, both of which are occasionally performed today. Both pieces have been recorded in recent years, as has a collection of Parker's excellent piano miniatures, works intentionally evocative of several other composers that would serve as excellent pedagogical pieces. He also wrote a significant amount of chamber music, much of which has been unperformed since the composer's lifetime.¹¹⁴

When Horatio Parker died on December 18, 1919, the world in which he had worked and developed was fast becoming unrecognizable. His final work, *A.D. 1919*, was written to honor those Yale men who served and died in the First World War;¹¹⁵ as Parker conducted the premiere on June 15, 1919 he was acknowledging both the end of the war and the end of his career. He did not conduct publicly again. It is fitting that the catastrophic war that created the twentieth century was the final topic that Dr. Parker negotiated. His place has yet to be fully assessed, but there can be little doubt that even if his health had been better, his compositional tendencies would have been fast eclipsed by the rapid changes of the 1920s. Parker died in his daughter Isabel's

¹¹³ Several of his hymn tunes remain in use, and can be found in the hymnals of several denominations. The Hymnal of the Episcopal Church in the United States retains some of his music in its most recent edition (that of 1982), hymns that have been in use since Parker served as the editor for that denomination's hymnal committee in 1903.

¹¹⁴ For a complete list of Parker's works, see Kearns, *Horatio Parker: Life, Music, and Ideas*, 289-317.

¹¹⁵ The libretto was by Yale faculty member Brian Hooker, who also wrote the texts for Parker's two operas.

home, following a short bout of pneumonia. He was travelling south at the time, hoping to recuperate a bit on a cruise in the Caribbean.

His place in music history remains difficult to assess. William Kearns's description of the composer may suffice until enough historical distance has passed for a dispassionate analysis:

Parker was one of the most important composers before World War I. He was also a choirmaster, an organist, a symphony orchestra conductor, a music educator, a lecturer on musical subjects – in short, he was the kind of musician who is very much the product of our highly inclusive, flexible American civilization.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Kearns, *Horatio Parker: Study of His Life and Music*, Ph.D. diss., 1.

CHAPTER IV

DE CONTEMPTU MUNDI

Background of the Poem

Bernard of Cluny's¹¹⁷ *De Contemptu Mundi* is comprised of some 2966 lines of verse separated neatly into three books of relatively balanced length (1078, 974, and 914 lines respectively).¹¹⁸ For its era, the middle third of the twelfth century,¹¹⁹ *De Contemptu Mundi* is a remarkably well-crafted and complex poem: its author chose a difficult poetic meter, *tripartiti dactylici caudati* (explained below), and managed to sustain it for nearly three thousand lines. That Bernard realized the impressiveness of his poem, at least with regard to its length and structure, is attested to by the poet in the prologue, dedicated to his abbot but likely intended for wider consumption.¹²⁰

De Contemptu Mundi is considered by scholars to be an encapsulation of the religious-intellectual spirit of twelfth-century Europe: scorn for the materialism of this world, repudiation of the wickedness of humankind's behavior, longing for life

¹¹⁷ Nothing about Bernard is known except his name, that he lived and worked in the Abbey of Cluny during the twelfth century, and that he wrote *De Contemptu Mundi*. Different sources make conjectures based on perceived allusions within the poem's text, oral tradition, and word choice, but most of the guesses as to his identity are just that, guesses. The poet is alternately referred to as Bernard of Cluny, Bernard of Morval, and Bernard of Morlaix, among other names. While Horatio Parker used the latter of these, which was the common choice of his day, this document uses the first, Bernard of Cluny, as the only name that has a provable provenance. Original usage will be retained when referencing documents that use older forms of the poet's name; if that usage renders meaning unclear, a clarifying footnote will be included. See Ronald E. Pepin, *Scorn for the World: Bernard of Cluny's De Contemptu Mundi, The Latin Text with English Translation and Introduction*, East Lansing, Colleagues Press, 1991, xi for further information regarding Bernard's identity.

¹¹⁸ For the purposes of this study, the most recent full translation of *De Contemptu Mundi*, contained in the following book was used: Ronald E. Pepin, *Scorn for the World*.

¹¹⁹ Pepin, *Scorn for the World*, xi. The dating of the poem to ca. 1150, while somewhat inexact to modern tastes, is calculated from the dedication of the work. *De Contemptu Mundi* is dedicated to the Cluniac abbot Peter the Venerable, who is known to have held office from 1122-1156.

¹²⁰ Bernard spends considerable time in the prologue, which is in the form of a letter, discussing the specific form and metrical usage of *De Contemptu Mundi*. See Pepin, *Scorn for the World*, 3-11.

everlasting with God, sincere exhortations toward good living in order to ensure salvation, and nostalgia for a dimly perceived golden age, in which men and women were more elevated beings, almost good enough to be heavenly citizens.¹²¹

¹²¹ A good, if somewhat dated, basic explanation of the evolution of the medieval Catholic worldview can be found in George Cross, "The Mediaeval Catholic Doctrine of the Future Life," in *The Biblical World*, Vol. 39, No. 3, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, March, 1912, pp. 188-199. While changes in scholarship over the past century have fleshed out the understanding of the medieval world, Cross's article provides a good foundation and is close enough in time to Horatio Parker's composition of *Hora Novissima* to shed a good deal of light onto the manner in which the Victorian/Edwardian intellectual community viewed the era of the creation of *De Contemptu Mundi*.

Scholarly Opinions

In his article on *De Contemptu Mundi*, Ray C. Petry refers to the poem as “one of the starkest representations of social decay, approaching world’s end, and impending judgment to be found in mediaeval literature.”¹²² While this statement bears out the overall medieval view referenced above, Petry is quick to point out that Bernard’s text is also a call to arms; a glimmer of hopefulness that believers will rise to the task of proving, “by their earthly life in service to other people, their right to be adjudged worthily.”¹²³ In essence, a poem often viewed as a sensationalized listing of humanity’s descent and decrepitude can instead be seen as an exhortation to good living: a cautionary tale, certainly, but one laced with a sincere hope for the salvation of souls.¹²⁴

The preface to the 1867 edition of Dr. Neale’s paraphrase describes the dichotomous nature of the poem thus:

The poem itself is titled, “De Contemptu Mundi,” and the greater part of it is a bitter satire on the fearful corruptions of the age. But as a contrast to the misery and pollution of earth, the poem opens with a description of the peace and glory of heaven, of such rare beauty, as not easily to be matched by any mediæval composition on the same subject.¹²⁵

A poem that may have been intended as a denunciation of man as hopelessly fallen finds new purpose in the optimism of the Anglo-American worldview of the nineteenth century. Careful editing by 19th-century translators and by Parker in his libretto for

¹²² Ray C. Petry, “Mediaeval Eschatology and Social Responsibility in Bernard of Morval’s *De Contemptu Mundi*,” *Speculum*, Vol. 24, No. 2, April, 1949. p. 207 Medieval Academy of America

¹²³ Ibid. 210

¹²⁴ This hopefulness may be the reason that H.C. Hoskier refers, in the dedication of his edition of the poem, to Bernard as “one of the bravest men who ever lived.” Pepin, *De Contemptu Mundi*, xxii.

¹²⁵ John Mason Neale, *The Rhythm of Bernard de Morlaix, Monk of Cluny. On The Celestial Country*, New York: H.B. Durand, 1867.

Hora Novissima reinforce the more joyous aspects of the text by limiting themselves, in large part, to verses drawn from the first book, the section dwelling on what Neale called “The Celestial Country.” While, according to medieval scholar Ray Petry, “Bernard simply could not think of anything more important to him and his fellow-men than avoiding hell and arriving at heaven,” Neale and his immediate successors seem content to briefly allude to concerns of damnation and concentrate instead on the glories of Bernard’s lovingly presented vision of the afterlife.

Parker's Choice of Text and the Genesis of *Hora Novissima*

Parker's choice of text clearly follows this basic format of brief, if dire, warnings yielding to sumptuous celebrations of Bernard's heavenly vision. In fact, of the eleven movements in Parker's *Hora Novissima*, only four have any reference to pain, punishment, or damnation at all, and these moments are only brief warnings or musings immediately mitigated by the promise of everlasting life in paradise. In the first movement, for example, the opening two sentences offer a brief, somewhat terrifying vision of apocalypse: "It is the final hour, the times are most wicked – be watchful! See, the highest judge menacingly draws near."¹²⁶ This stark utterance, which is the first choral entrance of the work, is followed by a listing of reasons for the judge's approach. After his initial awe-inducing entry, Bernard's Christ begins to resemble the shepherd of the parables more than the warrior-judge of Revelation. His approach might be menacing, but this judge's sentences are anything but. "He draws near to end evils, draws near to crown justice, to reward virtue, to release from worries, to bestow heaven, to remove harsh and heavy burdens from the troubled mind, to fortify temperance, to punish wickedness, both justly."¹²⁷

While Parker chooses to dwell mightily on awe and angst in the introduction to the first movement (and the recapitulation of the sonata-derived form), he also, probably for reasons of emotional and musical balance within the movement and the piece as a whole, spends considerable energy painting the serene, profound joy promised in Bernard's vision. It is easy to get caught up, as many earlier commentators have, in the

¹²⁶ Ronald E. Pepin, *Scorn for the World: Bernard of Cluny's De Contemptu Mundi, The Latin Text with English Translation and Introduction*, East Lansing, Colleagues Press, 1991, 13.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

near sadistic relish with which Bernard describes the evils of his day; Parker seems to understand the elementally hopeful worldview underlying the entire poem. This enables him to choose verses appropriate to the overarching message while including just enough of damnation and hellfire to keep things interesting. *Hora Novissima* brims with hopeful optimism. It would lose its power if it didn't feature some fear and doubt to leaven the joy.

Both Parker's daughter and his friend Chadwick¹²⁸ indicate that her father had originally begun work on a different Latin poem, *Vita nostra plena bellis*,¹²⁹ but discarded the text "on account of the monotony and inflexibility of the text."¹³⁰ *De contemptu mundi* is equally inflexible with regard to meter, but anything but monotonous with regard to theme and imagery. The dedication of Parker's piece, to his recently deceased father, might suggest a more emotional tie to the text, especially given Parker's careful culling of the poem to arrive at an overt central theme of hopefulness. His daughter seems to support that idea, noting that *De contemptu mundi* was apparently a favorite poem of Charles Edward Parker.¹³¹ The composer provided this description of his choice to set *De contemptu mundi*:

I selected the poem, not because it is particularly the best one of its kind, but because it suited my purpose. It occurred to me that, as the "Stabat Mater" had been made so beautiful in the musical setting, this could be made as well. At the same time, my uncle, a Professor of Latin and Greek at Dartmouth, to whom I wrote a description of what I wanted, also recommended this poem.¹³²

¹²⁸ In Parker's correspondence, he charmingly refers to the elder composer as "Chad."

¹²⁹ This poem, by Bernard's contemporary Alain de Lille (Alanus de Insulis), was set for chorus by Parker's colleague Arthur Foote.

¹³⁰ Semler, *Horatio Parker*, 80 and Kearns, *Horatio Parker: Life, Music, and Ideas*, 106.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹³² From an undated interview in the *Boston Journal*, MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University: Box 31, Folder 32. Also quoted in Kearns, *Horatio Parker, Life Music and Ideas*, 106.

Given the norms and societal expectations of the day, it is unsurprising that Parker would have eschewed any overt reference to a working through of his grief at the loss of his father. The choosing of text, and the close work on translation with his mother, lends credibility to a reading of *Hora Novissima* as similar in impetus to the *Requiem* masses of other composers: an artistic response to personal tragedy.¹³³

¹³³ The composition of *Hora Novissima* also coincided with the deaths of Parker's grandmother, youngest sister, and infant son.

Meter in *De contemptu mundi*

The repetitious nature of the metric structure of *De contemptu mundi* was the glory of its author. Sustaining 3000 lines of verse in *tripartiti dactylici caudate*¹³⁴ is an impressive feat, as that meter requires a constantly repeating structure of couplets, each containing three dactyls, some with internal rhymes that are not required to be at the end of the line. The dactyl stress of an accented syllable followed by two unaccented syllables gave Parker a great deal of musical material, but also provided some danger of monotony. The inclusion of the term *caudate* indicates the presence of a shortened foot at the end (or “tail,” as the Latin term indicates) of any given line. This subtle possibility of variation allows for a bit of flexibility in the meter. Bernard’s hexametric lines most often end with a trochee instead of a dactyl.¹³⁵ Constant repetition of any metric scheme over a seventy-minute work requires exquisite attention to rhythmic detail if one is to avoid the possibility of metric monotony.¹³⁶ Below are two couplets with diacritical markings to indicate stress as examples of the overall meter of the poem. The first set is the beginning of both the poem and Parker’s *Hora Novissima*, the second begins in line 300 of the first book of the poem, and is the section that Parker

¹³⁴ This is somewhat different meter than the heroic, or Leonine, dactylic hexameter of Homer and Virgil, in that Bernard, with very rare exceptions, only uses a trochee as the last foot of the meter; older Latin and Greek epic poetry allowed for substitutions of a spondee for all but the fifth foot of the hexametric structure. The classic textbook example is the beginning of Virgil’s *Aeneid*: *Árma virúmque canó Tróiaé quí prímus ab óris* (I sing of arms and a man, who first from the shores of Troy), which consists of two dactyls, two spondees, a dactyl, and a concluding spondee. Bernard most often retains the concluding spondee, but keeps to a steady pattern of dactyls before the concluding foot, yielding a meter that is even stricter than its classical predecessor: five dactyls and one spondee. An excellent introductory discussion to Latin poetry can be found at www.novaroma.org; *The Cambridge Latin Course*, published by Cambridge University Press with its most recent edition in 2001, is also a useful basic reference.

¹³⁵ For an excellent basic resource regarding poetic meter, see X.J. Kennedy’s *An Introduction to Poetry*, currently in its 13th edition.

¹³⁶ See Appendix A for a listing of rhythmic motives employed throughout *Hora Novissima* as a means of avoiding this danger.

used for the tenth movement of *Hora Novissima*, “Urbs Syon unica.” The internal rhymes are bolded to outline their various placements within the couplets; terminal rhymes are bolded and italicized.

Hóra **novíssima**, témpora **péssima** súnt – ***vigilémus***.
Écce **mináciter** ímminent **árbitér** ílle ***suprémus***.

Ímminent **ímminent** út mala **términet**, aéqua ***corónet***,
Récta **remúneret**, ánxia **liberet**, aéthera ***dónet***.

Ex. 4.1 Opening couplets of both *De contemptu mundi* and *Hora Novissima*.

Úrbs Syon **única**, mánsio **mýstica** cóndita ***caélo***,
Núnc tibi **gáudeo**, núnc mihi **lúgeo**, trístor ***anhélo***.

Té, quia **córpore** nón queo, **péctore** saépe ***penétro***;
Séd caro **térrea** térraque **cárnea**, móx cado ***rétro***.

Ex. 4.2 *De contemptu mundi*, Lines 300-304 and the opening couplets of Movement VII of *Hora Novissima*, “Stant Syon atria.”

Given his background, and that of most of the educated class in his era, Parker surely had more than a basic understanding of Bernard’s use of meter, and more than a passing understanding of the *De contemptu mundi* and its possibilities. He also had easy access to people who specialized in the classics in the persons of his mother, who prepared a singing translation of the poem that is surprisingly accurate given the difficulties of working in a meter so poorly suited for English poetry, and his uncle, the professor who recommended the text.

The study of classical and medieval Latin poetry is no longer en vogue. It may be useful, therefore, to have several side-by-side translations available as a tool for studying the text and as an aid to more fully analyzing the poem as it functions in *Hora Novissima*. Below is such a table. It shows the original text, Mrs. Parker's singing translation, John Mason Neale's paraphrase, Henry Preble's translation, and finally the work of Ronald Pepin, the most recent translator to tackle what he calls Bernard's "horrific hexameters."¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Neither Neale nor Preble translated the entire poem. They are significant in their chronological proximity to Parker, as Pepin is significant in his nearness to our own time. The appellation "horrific hexameters" comes from the introduction to Pepin's translation, Pepin, Ronald, *Scorn for the World: Bernard of Cluny's De Contemptu Mundi: The Latin Text with English Translation and an Introduction*. East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1991.

Hora Novissima: Original Text (by movement) and Four Translations

Original Text ¹³⁸	Isabella G. Parker ¹³⁹	John Mason Neale ¹⁴⁰	Henry Preble ¹⁴¹	Ronald E. Pepin ¹⁴²
<p><i>I. Hora novissima, Tempora pessima Sunt, vigilemus!</i>¹⁴³ <i>Ecce minaciter Imminet arbiter Ille supremus:</i></p>	<p>Cometh earth's latest hour, Evil hath mighty power; Now watch we ever- <i>Keep we vigil.</i> Lo, the great judge appears! O'er the unfolding years: Watching forever.</p>	<p>The world is very evil;¹⁴⁴ The times are waxing late: Be sober and keep vigil; The Judge is at the gate:</p>	<p>The hour of doom is at hand; the times are out of joint. Let us awake! Behold, the Supreme Judge stands threateningly over us,</p>	<p>It is the final hour, the times are most wicked – be watchful! See, the highest judge menacingly draws near.</p>
<p><i>Imminet, imminet Ut mala terminet, Æqua coronet, Recta remuneret, Anxia liberet, Æthera donet.</i></p>	<p>Mightiest, mightiest, He is made manifest Right ever crowning True hearts in mansion fair, Free from all anxious care,</p>	<p>The judge that comes in mercy, The judge that comes with might, To terminate the evil, To diadem the right.</p>	<p>To end the evil, crown the right, reward the good, free the troubled, and give us the realms of light.</p>	<p>He draws near to end evils, draws near to crown justice, to reward virtue, to release from worries, to bestow heaven,</p>

¹³⁸ The Latin text of Parker's oratorio as it appears in the original published score (Horatio Parker, *Hora Novissima*, Op. 30, London: Novello and Company, Limited, 1900.), divided by movement.

¹³⁹ Isabella G. Parker, the composer's mother, was a noted classicist and translator in her day. Horatio Parker relied on his mother to create singable English translations for several of his pieces. Her translation is also taken from the original published score.

¹⁴⁰ Neale's contribution to the translation history of *De Contemptu Mundi* is, by his own admission, more a "close imitation" than a translation; in other words, a paraphrase. It is included due to its popularity as a source of English hymnody in the nineteenth century. Parker, and any other highly trained English-speaking church musician of the day, would certainly have been familiar with and consulted Neale's work. John Mason Neale, *The Rhythm of Bernard de Morlaix, Monk of Cluny. On The Celestial Country*, New York: H.B. Durand, 1867.

¹⁴¹ Samuel Macauley Jackson, ed., Henry Preble, tr. *The Source of "Jerusalem the Golden" Together with Other Pieces Attributed to Bernard of Cluny, in English Translation*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1910.

¹⁴² Ronald E. Pepin, *Scorn for the World: Bernard of Cluny's De Contemptu Mundi, The Latin Text with English Translation and Introduction*, East Lansing, Colleagues Press, 1991. This is the most recent scholarly translation of the complete poem *De Contemptu Mundi*.

¹⁴³ All punctuation and capitalization are taken directly from the original published score (in the case of the Latin text and Isabella Parker's translation) or from the three translations referenced above. Anachronistic use of modern punctuation in the Latin text is retained as an aid to understanding the composer's parsing of the poem.

¹⁴⁴ The original spelling, punctuation, and capitalization of each translation/paraphrase are retained, even when archaic or considered incorrect.

<p><i>Auferat aspera Duraque pondera Mentis onustæ, Sobria muniat, Improba puniat, Utraque juste.</i></p>	<p>Ever enthroning.</p> <p>Bears He the painful goad, Lightens the heavy load, Heavy it must be; Giveth the rich reward, Meteth the penance hard, Each given justly.</p>	<p>When the just and gentle Monarch Shall summon from the tomb, Let man, the guilty, tremble, For man, the God, shall doom.</p>	<p>He will take away the hard and heavy load of the burdened soul, will strengthen the worthy, and punish the wicked, with justice to both.</p>	<p>To remove harsh and heavy burdens from the troubled mind, to fortify temperance, to punish wickedness, both justly.</p>
<p>II. <i>Hic breve vivitur, Hic breve plangitur, Hic breve fletur: Non breve vivere, Non breve plangere, Retribuatur.</i></p> <p><i>O retributio! Stat brevis actio, Vita perennis; O retributio! Cœlica mansio Stat lue plenis;</i></p> <p><i>Quid datur et quibus Æther? egentibus, Et cruce dignis, Sidera vermibus, Optima sontibus, Astra malignis.</i></p>	<p>Here life is quickly gone, Here grief is ended soon, Here tears are flowing; Life ever fresh is there, Life free from anxious care, God's hand bestowing.</p> <p>O blessed paradise! Where endless glory lies, Rapture unending. O dwelling full of light, Where Christ's owen presence bright Glory is lending.</p> <p>Who shall this prize attain, Who this blest guerdon gain, Here the cross bearing? Crowns for the lowliest, Thrones for the holiest,</p>	<p>Brief life is here our portion; Brief sorrow, short-liv'd care; That life that knows no ending, The tearless life is <i>there.</i></p> <p>O happy retribution! Short toil, eternal rest; For mortals and for sinners A mansion with the blest!</p> <p>That we should look, poor wand'ers To have our home on high! That worms should seek for dwellings Beyond the starry sky! To</p>	<p>Here we live a little while, and wail a little while, and weep a little while; the recompense shall be a life not brief nor e'en brief tears.</p> <p>Oh, recompense! Our brief course here eternal life awaits. Oh, recompense! A heavenly mansion waits for them of misery full.</p> <p>What is it that is given, and to whom? Heaven to needy creatures who merit the cross, the starry skies to worms, good gifts to guilty souls. Heavenly</p>	<p>Here one lives a short time, weeps a short time. The recompense will be not to live a short time, not to lament even a short time.</p> <p>O recompense, a brief action and then everlasting life. O recompense, a heavenly mansion remains for those now filled with decay.</p> <p>What is given, and to whom? Heaven to the poor and those worthy of torture, constellations to worms, the best things to</p>

<p><i>Sunt modo prælia, Postmodo præmia, Qualia? plena: Plena reflectio, Nullaque passio, Nullaque pœna.</i></p>	<p>Heaven's honors sharing.</p> <p>Now is the battle hour, Then great rewards our dower, What are they? blessing – Blessings unknown before, Passion shall vex no more, Peace yet increasing.</p>	<p>all one happy guerdon Of one celestial grace; For all, for all, who mourn their fall, Is one eternal place:</p> <p>And now we fight the battle, But then shall wear the crown Of full and everlasting And passionless renown:</p>	<p>grace not only gives us all the gifts of light, but crowns our flesh above the stars.</p> <p>Now we have battle, but hereafter rewards, and of what sort? Complete; complete renewal, free from all suffering and trouble.</p>	<p>sinner, stars to the wicked.</p> <p>Now there are battles, but afterward rewards. What kind? Full ones, full refreshment, no suffering, no pain.</p>
<p>III. <i>Spe modo vivitur, Et Syon angitur A Babylone; Nunc tribulatio; Tunc recreatio, Sceptra, coronæ.</i></p>	<p>Zion is captive yet, Longing for freedom sweet, In exile mourning; Now is the hour of night, Then crowned with full delight. Zion returning.</p>	<p>And now we watch and struggle, And now we live in hope, And Syon, in her anguish, With Babylon must cope: But He Whom now we trust in Shall then be seen and known, And they that know and see Him Shall have Him for their own.</p>	<p>146</p>	<p>Now one lives in hope, and Zion is choked by Babylon; now there is distress, but then recovery, scepters, crowns.</p>

¹⁴⁶ Both Preble's and Neale's translations are incomplete. Sections not translated appear as blank boxes in the table.

<p><i>Tunc nova Gloria¹⁴⁵ Pectora sobria Clarificabit, Solvat enigmata. Veraque Sabbata Continuabit.</i></p> <p><i>Patria splendida, Terraque florida, Liberata spinis, Danda fidelibus Est ibi civibus, Hic peregrinis.</i></p>	<p>Ever new glories still The inmost heart shall fill With joy supernal. All doubts shall disappear When dawneth, calm and clear, Sabbath eternal.</p> <p>O country glorious Love hath prepared for us, Thornless thy flowers! Given to faithful ones, There to be citizens- Such joy be ours!</p>			<p>Then a new glory will illuminate temperate hearts, it will solve mysteries and continue true Sabbaths without interruption.</p> <p>The shining country and land of flowers, free of thorns, here given to strangers, must be given to faithful citizens.</p>
<p>IV. Pars mea, Rex meus, In proprio Deus Ipse decore Visus amabitur, Atque videbitur Auctor in ore.</p> <p><i>Tunc Jacob Israel,</i></p>	<p>Most Mighty, most holy, How great is the glory Thy throne enfolding! When shall we see Thy face, And all Thy wonders trace, Joyful beholding?</p> <p>All the long history,¹⁴⁷</p>	<p>Yes! God my King and Portion, In fullness of His grace, We then shall see for ever, And worship face to face.</p> <p>Then Jacob into Israel, From earthlier self</p>		<p>My portion, my King, God Himself seen in His own beauty will be loved, and the Creator will be seen face to face.</p> <p>Then Jacob will become Israel and Leah will</p>

¹⁴⁵ Here Parker chooses to depart from a chronological ordering of the poem's text. The text for the third movement begins at Line 185 of the first book of *De Contemptu Mundi*, immediately following the end of the words set in the second movement. The libretto then jumps back to Line 107 for one couplet and skips ahead to Line 113 for the final couplet. This ordering is in keeping with Parker's overall optimistic view of a poem which can be read as an outright condemnation of the entire world and all in it. In choosing to go backwards to set this aria, Parker also avoids a rather torturous listing of the people likely to triumph and receive crowns and scepters, which begins in Line 187, immediately following the first couplet used in the third movement. This moment is the only place in the libretto that moves backwards in the original text. Other movements skip ahead in the text, but they always do so in order.

¹⁴⁷ There seems to be no clear reason why Mrs. Parker removed references to these Old Testament figures in her translation.

<p><i>Et Lia tunc Rachel Efficietur, Tunc Syon Atria, Pulchraque patria Perficietur.</i></p>	<p>All the deep mystery, Through ages hidden. When shall our souls be blest, To the great marriage feast Graciously bidden?</p>	<p>estranged, And Leah into Rachel Forever shall be changed: Then all the halls of Syon For aye shall be complete, And, in the Land of Beauty, All things of beauty meet.</p>		<p>become Rachel. Then the halls of Zion and the glorious homeland will be perfected.</p>
<p>V. <i>O bona patria, Lumina sobria Te speculantur: Ad tu nomina Sobria lumina Collacrymantur:</i></p> <p><i>Est tua mentio Pectoris unctio, Cura doloris, Concupientibus Æthera mentibus Ignis amoris.</i></p> <p><i>Tu locus unicus, Illeae cœlicus Es paradisus: Non ibi lacryma, Sed pacidissima Gaudia risus</i></p>	<p>O country bright and fair, What are thy beauties rare? What thy rich treasures? Thy name brings joyful tears, Falling upon our ears, Sweet beyond measure.</p> <p>Thou art the home of rest, Thy mention to the breast Give bliss unspoken. Who learns thy blessed ways</p> <p>Shall have, in songs of praise, Comfort unbroken.</p> <p>Thou only mansion bright, Full of supreme delight, Thou art preparing, There shall all tears be dry,</p>	<p>For thee, O dear Country! Mine eyes their vigils keep; For very love, beholding Thy happy name, they weep:</p> <p>The mention of thy glory Is unction to the breast, And medicine in sickness, And love, and life, and rest.</p> <p>O one, O onely [sic.] Mansion! O Paradise of Joy! Where tears are ever banished, And smiles have no alloy.¹⁴⁸</p>		<p>O good homeland, sober eyes watch for you, at your name sober eyes are filled with tears.</p> <p>To say your name is an anointing for the heart, a cure for sorrow, the fire of love for souls desiring Heaven.</p> <p>You are the place unparalleled, You are the heavenly Paradise. There are no tears, but joys most peaceful, and laughter.</p>

¹⁴⁸ Neale goes on to a portion of the text not set by Parker here, and there is a comma rather than a period at the end of this sentence in his paraphrase.

	There in serenest joy All shall be sharing.			
VI. <i>Tu sine littore, Tu sine tempore, Fons, modo rivus, Dulce bonis sapis, Estque tibi lapis Undique vivus.</i>	Thou ocean without shore, Where time shall be no more, Dwelling most gracious. Fountain of love alone, Thou hast the living stone, Elect and precious.	Thou hast no shore, fair ocean! Thou hast no time, bright day! Dear fountain of refreshment to pilgrims far away! Upon the Rock of Ages They raise thy holy tower:		Now you are a never-ending stream, a timeless fountain. You savor sweetness and have a living stone everywhere.
<i>Est tibi laurea, Dos datur aurea, Sponsa decora, Primaque Principis Oscula suscipis, Inspicis ora.</i>	Thou hast the laurel fair, The heavenly bride shall wear, Robed in her splendor. First shall the Prince confer All priceless gifts on her, With glances tender.	Thine is the victor's laurel, And Thine the golden dower: Thou feel'st in mystic rapture, O Bride that know'st no guile, The Prince's sweetest kisses, The Prince's loveliest smile;		You are given a dowry of laurel, O lovely bride, and you receive the first kisses of the Prince;
<i>Candida lilia, Vivia monilia, Sunt tibi, sponsa,</i>	There are the lilies white, In garlands pure and bright, Her brow adorning.	Unfading lilies, bracelets Of living pearl thine own;		You look upon His face, and bright lilies, O bride, form your living necklace.
<i>Agnus adest tibi, Sponsus adest tibi, Lux speciosa.¹⁴⁹</i>	The Lamb her Spouse shall be, His light shines gloriously, Fairer than morning.	The Lamb is ever near thee, The Bridegroom thine alone;		Your bridegroom, the Lamb, is there and you stand in beauty before Him.

¹⁴⁹ Parker's text here is "lux speciosa;" a poem of this age usually has several variant texts, and the two newer editions both use "tu speciosa." The difference in meaning is noticeable: either the light (lux) or you, the bride (tu) are beautiful (speciosa).

<i>Tota negotia, Cantica dulcia Dulce tonare, Tam mala debita, Quam bona præbita, Conjubilare.</i>	There saints find full employ, Songs of triumphant joy Ever upraising. They who are most beloved, They who were tried and proved Together praising.	All thine endless leisure In sweetest accent sings, The ill that was thy merit, - The wealth that is thy King's!		Your whole occupation will be sweet songs, to sing sweetly, to rejoice over the punishments you deserve and the blessings you have been granted.
VII. Urbs Sion aurea, ¹⁵⁰ <i>Patria lactea, Cive decora, Omne cor obruis, Omnibus obstruis, Et cor et ora,</i>	Golden Jerusalem, Bride with her diadem, Radiant and glorious; Temple of light thou art, O'er mind and sould and heart, Thou art victorious.	Jerusalem the Golden, ¹⁵¹ With milk and honey blest, beneath thy contemplation Sink heart and voice oppressed:		Golden city of Zion, homeland flowing with milk and adorned with citizens, you overwhelm every heart, you silence the hearts and mouths of all.
<i>Nescio, nescio, Quæ jubilatio, Lux tibi qualis, Quam socialia Gaudia, Gloria Quam specialis:</i>	Who can tell – Who can tell What noble anthems swell Through thy bright portal? What dear delights are thine, What glory most divine, What light immortal?	I know not, O I know not, What social joys are there; What radiancy of glory, what light beyond compare!		I know not, I know not what rejoicing, what light you have, how many the joys of companionship, how special the glory.
<i>Laude studens ea Tollere, mens mea Victa fatiscit;</i>	Longing thy joys to sing, Worthily offering	And when I fain would sing them, My spirit fails and faints; And vainly		My mind is overcome, it grows weak trying to exalt these with

¹⁵⁰ Parker divides *Hora Novissima* into two parts; Movement VII serves as the beginning of Part II.

¹⁵¹ The section of text beginning with the words *Jerusalem the Golden*, as excerpted from Neale's paraphrase of the poem, forms the basis of what is probably the most well-known portion of the text. As a hymn set to a tune by Alexander Ewing, *Jerusalem the Golden* has persisted to the present day in many Protestant hymnals. As paraphrased by Neale, the text falls into a standard 7676 metric scheme, much simpler to set musically than the Latin original. Other movements of the text chosen by Parker include the remainder of the stanzas of Neale's hymn.

<i>O bona gloria, Vincor; in omnia Laus tua vicit.</i>	Love overflowing; Glory most bright and good, Feed me with heavenly food, New life bestowing.	would it image The assembly of the Saints.		praise. O noble glory, I am overcome! Your praise is victorious over all things!
VIII. <i>Stant Syon¹⁵² atria Conjubilantia, Martyre plena Cive micantia, Principe stantia, Luce serena.</i>	There stand those halls on high, There sound the songs of joy In noblest measure. There are the martyrs bright In heaven's o'erflowing light- The Lord's own treasure.	They stand, those halls of Syon, Conjubilant with song, And bright with many an angel, And all the martyr throng: The Prince is ever in them; The daylight is serene;		The halls of heaven are full of rejoicing, full of martyrs, bustling with citizens, abiding with the Prince, bright with light.
<i>Est ibi pascua Mitibus afflua, Praestita sanctis; Regis ibi thronus, Agminis et sonus Est epulantis.</i>	In pastures fresh and green The white-robed saints are seen, For ever resting; The kingly throne is near, And joyful shouts we hear, Of many feasting.	The pastures of the Blessed Are decked in glorious sheen. There is the Throne of David, - And there, from care released, The sog of them that triumph, The shout of them that feast;		There abundant pastures are given to the gentle saints. There is the King's throne and the sound of the feasting multitude.
IX. <i>Gens duce splendida, Concio candida, Vestibus albis, Sunt sine fletibus In Syon ædibus, Ædibus almis;</i>	People victorious, In raiment glorious, They stand forever. God wipes away their tears, Giving, through endless years,	And they who, with their Leader, Have conquered in the fight, For ever and for ever Are clad in robes of white!		The illustrious race with its Lord, the assembly shining in white garments. They are without weeping in Zion's

¹⁵² In the versions of the text most readily available in Parker's day, the text here is "Stant Syon atria /Conjubilantia;" the other translations read "Sunt Syon atria /Conjubilantia." It seems likely that the latter is the more accurate rendering, as it means "the halls of Zion are rejoicing;" The former rendering would mean something like "the halls of Zion stand rejoicing." Either way, the meaning is virtually identical.

<p><i>Sunt sine crimine, Sunt sine turbine, Sunt sine lite In Syon ædibus Editoribus Israelitæ.</i></p>	<p>Peace like a river.</p> <p>Earth's turmoils ended are, Strife, and reproach, and war, No more annoying: Children of blessedness Their heritage of peace Freely enjoying.</p>			<p> dwellings, those bountiful dwellings.</p> <p>The Israelites on Zion's lofty heights are without crime, without tumult, without strife.</p>
<p>X. <i>Urbs Syon unica, Mansio mystica, Condita cælo, Nunc tibi gaudio, Nunc mihi lugeo, Tristor, anhelo;</i></p>	<p>City of high renown, Home of the saints alone, Built in the heaven; Now I will sing thy praise, Adore the matchless grace To mortals given.</p>	<p>Jerusalem the onely, That look'st from heaven below, In thee is all my glory; In me is all my woe: And though my body may not, My spirit seeks thee fain, Till flesh and earth return me To earth and flesh again.</p>		<p>Unparalleled city of Zion, mystical mansion established in Heaven, now for you I rejoice, for myself I mourn, I am sad, I pant. Since I cannot enter you with my body, I often enter with my heart, but being made of earthly flesh, I soon fall backward.</p>
<p>XI. <i>Urbs Syon inclyta, Turris et edita Littore tuto, Te Peto, te colo, Te flagro, te volo, Canto, saluto;</i></p> <p><i>Nec meritis peto; Nam meritis meto Morte perire;</i></p>	<p>Thou city great and high, Towering beyond the sky, Storms reach thee never: I seek thee, long for thee; I love thee, I sing thee, I hail thee ever.</p> <p>Though I am unworthy Of mercy before Thee, Justly I perish;</p>	<p>Jerusalem, exulting On that securest shore, I hope thee, wish thee, sing thee, And love thee evermore!</p> <p>I ask not for my merit: I seek not to deny My merit is destruction, A</p>		<p>Renowned city of Zion, homeland established on a safe shore, I seek you, I revere you, I burn for you, I desire you, I praise you, I hail you.</p> <p>Not for my merits do I seek you, for I reap death for my merits, nor do I conceal in</p>

<p><i>Nec reticens tego, Quod meritis ego Filius iræ.</i></p>	<p>My follies confessing, Nor claiming Thy blessing, No hope I cherish.</p>	<p>child of wrath am I:</p>		<p>silence that for my merits I am a child of wrath.</p>
<p><i>Vita quidem mea, Vita nimis rea, Mortua vita Quippe reatibus Exitialibus Obruta, trita.</i></p>	<p>In deepest contrition, Owning my condition, My life unholy; Burdened with guiltiness, Weary and comfortless, Help, I implore Thee.</p>			<p>Indeed my life, my too-guilty life, in fact my life of death has been overcome and worn away by deadly guilt.</p>
<p><i>Spe tamen ambulo Præmia postulo Speque fideque; Illa perennia Postulo præmia Nocte dieque.</i></p>	<p>Yet will I faithfully Strive those rewards to see, Beck'ning so brightly; Ask in unworthiness Heavenly blessedness, Daily and nightly.</p>	<p>But yet with Faith I venture, And hope upon my way; For those perennial guerdons I labour night and day.</p>		<p>Yet I walk in hope, in hope and faith I ask rewards; night and day I ask those perpetual rewards.</p>
<p><i>Me Pater optimus Atque piissimus Ille creavit, In lue pertulit, Ex lue sustulit, A lue lavit.</i></p>	<p>For He, the Father blest, Wisest and holiest, Of life the Giver, Maketh His light to shine In this dark soul of mine, Dwelling for ever.</p>	<p>The Best and Dearest Father Who made me and Who saved, bore with me in defilement, And from defilement laved:</p>		<p>The Father, that best, most pious Father created me, in mud He finished me, from mud raised me up, from mud cleansed me.</p>
<p><i>O bona patria, Num tua gaudia Teque videbo? O bona patria, Num tua præmia Plena tenebo?</i></p>	<p>O land of full delight, Thy peerless treasures bright, May we behold them!</p>	<p>O sweet and blessed Country, Shall I ever win thy grace? I have the hope within me, to comfort</p>		<p>O good homeland, shall I not see you and your joys? O good homeland, shall</p>

	Thou home of beauty rare, May we thy blessings share! Priceless we hold them.	and to bless! Shall I ever win the prize itself? O tell me, tell me, Yes!		I not have your full rewards?
<i>O sacer, O pius, O ter et amplius Ille beatus, Cui sua pars Deus; O miser, O reus, Hac viduatus.</i>	O blessed for ever A thousandfold they are That rest attaining, Most blessed and holy With Thee in Thy glory For ever reigning.			O holy, O pious, O triple-blessed and more is the man who possesses God; O wretched, O guilty the man bereft of this part!

Ex. 4.3 The original text of *Hora Novissima*, drawn from the poem *De contemptu mundi*, with four translations.

CHAPTER V

CRITICAL RECEPTION OF *HORA NOVISSIMA*

*I am still disposed to set down as the chief glory of American Music-the oratorio "Hora Novissima."*¹⁵³

Overview

Henry Krehbiel's assessment of Horatio Parker's great cantata, echoed in several of his writings eulogizing Parker, may seem premature and extreme to early 21st-century readers, but the respected critic's opinion was hardly a minority one among the musical cognoscenti of the first two decades of the 20th century. Parker's reputation as a standard-bearer of American musical excellence, especially within the disciplines of ecclesiastical and choral composition, was recognized, too, outside the realms of professional music making and criticism: the Rev. Dr. Howard C. Robbins, noted theologian, author, and writer of several hymns, described *Hora Novissima* as "...the oratorio which is the chief glory of American music, and its chief claim to worldwide recognition."¹⁵⁴ As with many works, the early exultation surrounding *Hora Novissima* yielded to more sober criticism over time, however, and as the century wore on and Parker's Romantic, German-tinged training was supplanted first by a new, French-leaning school of American composers and later by the severity of the serialists, the work seemed less emblematic of American greatness and more derivative of the prevalent zeitgeist of the decadence of the end of the Romantic era in Europe. It is,

¹⁵³ H.E. Krehbiel, "Professor Parker as Among Leading Composers," *The Yale Alumni Weekly*, XXIX/15, January 2, 1920, 348. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University: Box 31, Folder 32.

¹⁵⁴ MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 37, Folder 4: Eulogy given by Howard C. Robbins for Parker Memorial Service at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City, March 7, 1920.

perhaps, impossible to dispassionately assess Parker's generation of American composers due to the intrusion of the seismic events of the 20th century and the attendant breaks in the evolution of style in Western music, but a reasonable analysis of *Hora Novissima*'s position in the musical canon can be posited by treading a middle path through the glowing, even worshipful tone of the early commentary and the patronizing, occasionally acidic, relegation of the work to the status of embarrassing forebear that characterizes much of the mid-20th century's criticism.

While the quotation that stands at the head of this chapter may be indicative more of the desire for American musical greatness at the turn of the last century than of a serious critical appraisal, its exuberance is not all that far removed from the general criticism that greeted the premiere of *Hora Novissima* in 1893. An anonymous reviewer, writing for the *New York Times*, wrote a glowing account of the work following its first performance, comparing it (positively) to the styles of Verdi, Gounod, Mendelssohn, Obrecht, and Josquin within the space of two paragraphs.¹⁵⁵ Dudley Buck, one of the progenitors of the late 19th-century explosion in American composition and an admired composer of sacred-texted cantatas himself, wrote to Parker referring to the oratorio as "a noble work, both technically and aesthetically" and "another happy sign of Young America's musical progress." Less excited and a bit more Victorian in verbiage, perhaps, than the reviewer for the *New York Times*, Buck nonetheless sends a clear signal that *Hora Novissima* was considered a major milestone in American music at the time of its composition. His handwritten letter indicates that the quality of Parker's piece compelled him to write, and such a response from a respected older

¹⁵⁵ "Amusements," *New York Times*, 4 May 1893, 12. Reprinted in *Source Readings in American Choral Music*, ed. David P. DeVenney (Missoula, MT: College Music Society, 1995), 86.

colleague prior to the premiere (Buck's letter is dated January 30, 1893; the premiere was in May of the same year) must have seemed a very positive indicator of the reception the work would receive. The promise of *Hora Novissima* seemed so great that the gushing reviewer for the *Musical Courier*, before the work had even been performed, found, for the first time it seems, hope for the music of the 20th century.¹⁵⁶

The exaggerated critical reception of Parker's cantata was, unsurprisingly, somewhat muted and less effusive in England. The uncredited critic for the *Musical Times*, writing shortly after the 1893 world premiere of *Hora Novissima*, refers to Parker as the "latest (and perhaps best) sample of the American-German composer," which seems faint praise, and makes several pointed references to echoes of other composers' styles manifesting themselves in the work: the germinal subject has "a distinct flavor of Brahms," a phrase is so similar to a Wagnerian leitmotif that "we cannot understand why the composer allowed himself to use it," counterpoint "somewhat after the style of Dvorák [*sic.*]," is evident and a section giving "rather an unfortunate reminiscence of Gounod" is mentioned, but only as a "small fault." Filtered through the lens of the patronizing attitude taken by European reviewers toward American composition in this era, most of the review, however, presents quite an affirming overall statement on the quality of Parker's craft. The variety of rhythmic devices employed is called out specifically for praise, and the critic seems particularly impressed with Parker's contrapuntal skill.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Anonymous Review, "Horatio Parker, *Hora Novissima*," *Musical Courier*, February 22, 1893, MSS 32. The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 6.

¹⁵⁷ Anonymous Review, "*Hora Novissima*," *The Musical Times*, Oct. 1, 1893 Box 30, Folder 15

Parker as skilled craftsman rather than inspired genius is a recurring theme that can be followed through much of the criticism of his compositions throughout the 20th century. The idea of the well-trained, but unoriginal, contrapuntist is such a truism regarding his output that it seems at least possible that *Hora Novissima*'s quality remains, at the outset of the 21st century, essentially unexamined in any truly thorough way.¹⁵⁸ The history of *Hora Novissima*'s critical reception which follows will highlight more than a century's worth of reactions to and discussions of the piece, from first-hand accounts of early performances to offhanded dismissals of it found in more recent commentary. It is hoped that a representative enough sampling of criticism will be included as to invite the reader to a reasonably thorough understanding of the difficulties surrounding the creation of a standard, widely-held critical opinion of *Hora Novissima*. No criticism can exist in a cultural vacuum and all writing concerning music is, by the ephemeral nature of its subject, imprecise. Even so, perhaps no body of work over the last few centuries has suffered the critical neglect and indifference of the scholarly community as much as the compositions of Parker and his American contemporaries. In the midst of the earlier disagreements concerning quality, compositional skill, beauty of melody, and originality and the later casual consent to an unexamined, yet generally presented as authoritative, critical consensus regarding *Hora Novissima*'s place (or lack thereof) in the canon, there lies an invitation for the reader, scholar, or listener to formulate opinions regarding this piece (and, perhaps, much of the rest of the Second New England School's legacy) using the information contained

¹⁵⁸ William K. Kearns's excellent work on Parker's overall life and output, both in his magisterial doctoral dissertation and in his articles and book, is an exception. His brief analysis of *Hora Novissima* provides a gateway for scholars and performers to begin forming critical views of the piece absent the sociological baggage attendant to the works of the Victorian/Edwardian American composers.

herein as a point of departure rather than a settled place of arrival. Below is an overview of the critical reception of *Hora Novissima* from its premiere through the first decade of the 21st century.

Broadly speaking, a great deal of the criticism of *Hora Novissima* falls into three basic categories: the cantata is either a masterpiece, an overly derivative composition, excellently constructed but severely lacking in originality or artistic merit, or an immature exercise, the work of a mere craftsman parading as artist. While it is occasionally difficult to discern a critic's true reaction to the work, especially through the filter of the prevailing 19th-century European concept of the United States as an artistic backwater, these three categories hold true through the present day.¹⁵⁹ As stated above, early American criticism tended toward the first of these categories, but, as with all criticism, there was neither complete agreement on the work itself nor agreement on which portions had more merit than others.

¹⁵⁹ One of the earliest English reviews of *Hora Novissima* notes, regarding America's artistic life, that "commercial pursuits seemed to engross them utterly, leaving no room for the flowers of civilisation;" the reviewer expresses surprise at the quality of Parker's composition as compared to prevalent expectations. Anonymous Review, "A New American Composer," *The Musical Times*, Oct. 1, 1893.

Previews and Anticipation

Before *Hora Novissima* even had its premiere, reviews of it appeared in the *Church Standard*, the *New York Tribune*, and the *St. James Choir Journal* in February and March of 1893. The uncredited writer for the *Church Standard* shows that the biases regarding the paucity of American art and the United States as a nation consumed by commerce to the detriment of other pursuits. “Even in a newer land of materialistic aims and standards...” he writes, “we may be thankful that the list of seers in the realm of sound is beginning to grow.”¹⁶⁰ Included in this reviewer’s list of these “seers in the realm of sound” is Parker, and although the justifying of American composers as approaching, if not attaining, the heights of their European counterparts takes up approximately two thirds of the single-column review, the final section finds great worth in the as-yet-unperformed canata. The writer refers to the musical content as rich, satisfying, and noble, and finds the skill apparent in Parker’s treatment of the germinal motive (found for the first time in mm. 11-15 of the first movement – see Chapter VI below) and its several manifestations throughout *Hora Novissima* indicates a “lofty destiny” for the work.¹⁶¹ The author of this brief review seems most impressed by the decision of Novello, the venerable British publishing house, to undertake the publication of the work. In the midst of proclaiming a sincere hope that American composition would soon achieve a place of honor, the reviewer cannot escape the ingrained mindset that any discussion of or aspiration to musical excellence necessarily required the imprimatur of some European authority: “Any work is honored by an

¹⁶⁰ Anonymous Review, Untitled, *The Church Standard*, February, 1893, no page listed. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 6.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

appearing in the familiar octavo form, with its yellow-brown cover, suggestive of the great names of Handel, Bach, Beethoven, and the rest.”¹⁶² Implicit in the inclusion of that listing of Central European greats is a statement of worthiness: in essence, Parker’s works would not be included in Novello’s impressive catalogue if they could not be held up alongside the acknowledged European masters. This is an overreach, of course, as Novello’s holdings and publications include, side by side with those of Beethoven and Bach, thousands of pieces that few consider great (or even competent), but it is an overreach with more than a grain of pride and hope. If a major European publisher found value in *Hora Novissima* before a note of it had even been heard in a public setting, surely American musical ascendancy had begun.

The reviewer for the *New York Tribune*, uncredited but most likely Henry Krehbiel,¹⁶³ presents a similar vision of *Hora Novissima* as a piece worthy of comparison with the best European models (which, in the 1890s, would have been considered by the majority of American readers without question the best music in the world). The review, which again is based on a perusal copy of the reduced score, states that Parker’s “new work is one of which every patriotic American music lover can be proud” and that the piece “unquestionably ranks with the finest of recent choral productions at home and abroad.”¹⁶⁴ The reviewer clearly sees in *Hora Novissima* a work that can be held up as more than merely competent, more than a piece that could be considered good only up to the point at which it is compared to European models.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Krehbiel served as the chief music critic at the *New York Tribune* from the 1880s through the first decades of the 20th century. His writings later in life proved him to be an ally and friend to Parker.

¹⁶⁴ Anonymous Review, Untitled, *New York Tribune*, March 14, 1893, no page listed. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 6.

The closing paragraph of the review is an exhortation to choral societies and orchestras, directing them to give Parker's new work a hearing in any city or town with the requisite performing forces.¹⁶⁵

The *St. James Choir Journal*, a publication tied to the Episcopal Church in New York City, was perhaps the most unabashedly glowing in its praise of *Hora Novissima*. The gushing reviewer states unequivocally that "Few works can be considered great: the 'Hora Novissima' is one of those few, and perhaps the first that has come from the pen of a New York composer and choirmaster."¹⁶⁶ In a surfeit of adjectives, the same author describes the text of the cantata as beautiful, poetical, and devotional, its vocal writing as graceful and clever, and its orchestration as masterly.¹⁶⁷ The excitement of the *Choir Journal*'s writer, in addition to painting the overall excitement surrounding the premiere of the work, is a reminder that the musical establishment (critics, performers, pedagogues, and the like) initially considered *Hora Novissima* to be a sacred work, as opposed to a concert work set to a sacred text. Parker's references to the piece as a sacred cantata, rather than an oratorio, bear this point of view out. Future critics and performers use the terms cantata and oratorio interchangeably when discussing the piece.

The enthusiasm of the New York critics was matched elsewhere, both in the United States and in Great Britain. The buzz leading up to the first performance made

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ The byline following this review is a set of initials, A.S.B.; as the publication itself is so difficult to trace it has thus far proved impossible to discover the reviewer's full name. The parish of St. James, still extant, is located at 865 Madison Ave. in Manhattan. A search of their print archives might yield more information regarding the *St. James Choir Journal*. Author listed by initials A.S.B., "Hora Novissima," *St. James Choir Journal*, February, 1893, no page listed. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 6.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

its way across the continent, not just over the ocean: the *Galveston Evening Tribune*, a daily paper from Galveston, Texas, includes excited references to Parker's extraordinary ability and notes, with pride, that the brother of the composer, a Mr. John S. Parker, is himself a resident of Galveston. The anonymous columnist calls Horatio Parker a "great composer, a masterly organist, and a man of remarkable talent."¹⁶⁸ The word "great" is appended to Parker's name for what is likely the first time in this brief human interest story; the article mentioned above, from the *St. James Choir Journal*, may contain the first reference to *Hora Novissima* as a great work. While nineteenth-century music criticism teems with hyperbole (both positive and negative), it is still a remarkable statement of the perceived worth of *Hora Novissima* and the hopes placed on the shoulders of its 30-year-old composer that such excitement and energy was in the air before a note of the piece had been performed.

¹⁶⁸ Anonymous, "Horatio W. Parker," *Galveston Evening Tribune*, 23 February 1893. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 6.

The World Premiere

It would be a challenge for any piece of art to bear the weight of expectation placed on *Hora Novissima* prior to its May, 1893 premiere: the American musical establishment had been searching for a composer who would compare favorably with the old world's best since shortly after the republic came into being.¹⁶⁹ Given the long odds of any American supplanting the quickly calcifying canon of European composers, it is somewhat surprising that the reviews of Parker's piece were so overwhelmingly positive. Comparisons to the works of earlier masters aside, *Hora Novissima* seems to have been adjudged largely on its own content and merit and on the skill and artistry of its composer. Like several other more famous works, *Hora Novissima* even survived a mediocre premiere performance with its artistic integrity relatively unscathed and, apparently, intelligible to the critics in the audience. The unnamed critic for the *New York Times* (interestingly, writing in a section of the newspaper called "Amusements") summed up the first performance: "Though inadequately performed, the 'Hora Novissima' made a deep impression and at once took rank among the best works written on this side of the Atlantic."¹⁷⁰

John Christian Freund, writing for *Freund's Weekly*, a precursor of the still-extant periodical the *Musical Review*, singles out *Hora Novissima* for its boldness and the originality of its concept and musical material.¹⁷¹ He finds in Parker's work a

¹⁶⁹ During his lifetime, German immigrant Anthony Philipp Heinrich (1781-1861), for example, was referred to as the "Log Cabin Beethoven;" Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869) was called the "American Chopin." American composers (whether by birth or by choice) felt the need to live up to European models until quite recently.

¹⁷⁰ Anonymous Review, "The Church Choral Society," *New York Times*, 4 May 1893, 12.

¹⁷¹ John Christian Freund, "'Hora Novissima': The Triumphs of an American Composer", in *Freund's Weekly*, 6 May 1893. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 6.

worthy competitor to the most well-regarded sacred composers of the 19th century, calling *Hora Novissima* “a composition worthy of a place amid the best works of the best writers of modern sacred music”¹⁷² Freund includes Gounod and Dvořák in this foremost rank of writers, reinforcing the recurring theme of European composition as the measuring stick of a piece’s merit.

In the same review, Freund presents an early form of the most commonly leveled accusation regarding Parker’s compositions in general and *Hora Novissima* specifically: that his craft sometimes subverts his ability to communicate in artistically and emotionally meaningful ways. Following what can only be classified as an overall rave review of the piece and its composer, with some misgivings regarding the quality and level of preparation of the chorus and orchestra, Freund includes a brief sentence of admonition toward the end of his article. He states that “...if any criticism can be made on the work, it is this: the composer is *too* erudite [emphasis his], and that occasional simplicity of treatment would be a relief.”¹⁷³ Coming, as it does, at the end of an excellent notice, the inclusion of this subtle admonition seems to function more as a way of adding a sense of gravitas to a review that might have been dismissed as overly simplistic or worshipful. Nevertheless, the accusation presented by Freund of an excess of craft to the detriment of artistic excellence follows both composer and work throughout their histories.

If possible, the reviewer for the *Church Standard*, presumably the same critic that previewed *Hora Novissima* the February, 1893 issue of the same publication, presents an even more superlative review of the premiere of the work, again using the

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

same Eurocentric concept of composition as the standard of excellence.¹⁷⁴ Parker's work is cited as evidence of the "adult stature in the existence of musical art and of ecclesiastical art in America," and *Hora Novissima* is "just as good as if it came from Europe."¹⁷⁵ These compliments say as much about the state of America's growing sense of national identity, perhaps, as they do about the excellence of a composer's abilities. The piece is marked as excellent due to its perceived adherence to the stylistic norms of Romantic European composers. It could not be critiqued in any other way in the New York of the 1890s, due to the perceived paucity of American exemplars. The 19th-century ideal of progressive growth in the American nation necessarily meant that Parker's work should be better than his predecessors' pieces; if this was the case, then it follows that the only real works to compare an evolved piece like *Hora Novissima* must come from cultures already in a demonstrably higher state of artistic evolution, namely the German-speaking lands.

The *Church Standard* review praises Parker's melodic inventiveness and his ability to create harmonic motion that is at once modern and pleasant, rather than the (alleged) harsh, difficult-on-the-ear compositions of Strauss.¹⁷⁶ The reviewer's joy in being able to positively contrast an American composer to an acknowledged (albeit young) European musician is palpable. Parker's writing is praised for its originality, its luminosity, its melodiousness, and the catchall "other musicianly qualities."¹⁷⁷ The *Church Standard*'s reviewer uses a truly extraordinary (some might say inordinate)

¹⁷⁴ Anonymous Review, "Music", *The Church Standard*, 13 May 1893, 19. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 6.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ It should be noted that Parker was a devotee of the music of Richard Strauss.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

number of adjectives, within the context of a single-column review, to describe Parker's compositional triumph: important, refreshing, inspiring, original, characteristic, independent, pronounced (these previous three describing the thematic and melodic content of the work), lovely (twice), superlative, graceful, delicate, and interesting (these final three describing the writing for soloists specifically).¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.



Ex. 5.1. Cover to the program for the February 4, 1894 Handel and Haydn Society performance of *Hora Novissima*. Courtesy of the Archives of the Handel and Haydn Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

Boston and the Nordica Affair

Hora Novissima's premiere was considered important enough to be mentioned in the newspapers of other major American cities, notably Boston, which was, in the 1890s, perhaps the closest thing America had to an art music capital. Indeed, as the program shown above in Ex. 5.1 indicates, Parker was already being considered for elevation into the musical pantheon by some in Boston at the time of the piece's first performance in that city. Note his name listed on the masthead for the program, at the same level as Bach, Handel, and Mendelssohn, providing a visual reminder of the American musical establishment's hopes for Parker's career.¹⁷⁹ It is therefore not surprising that, even before *Hora Novissima* was performed in Boston, the piece was receiving a significant amount of press coverage. The *Boston Transcript* reprinted a portion of the notice from the *New York Tribune* on May 9th (the first performance was on May 3rd) with annotations from the *Transcript*'s own unidentified critic. The *Transcript* notice, less enthusiastic than the New York reviews written by people actually present at the event, still refers to the work as "full of fascination for the lovers of sound, dignified, and earnest ecclesiastical music"¹⁸⁰

Parker's new work may have drawn greater attention in Boston due to his acceptance of a position as a church organist in that city around the time of *Hora Novissima*'s first performance, but his New England connections remained strong throughout his career, and it therefore follows that his new cantata would have had a good chance being performed there at some point. Parker might have expected a

¹⁷⁹ Amy Beach was afforded similar treatment for the premiere of her Grand Mass in E flat.

¹⁸⁰ Anonymous Review, "Horatio W. Parker's 'Hora Novissima,'" *Boston Transcript*, 9 May 1893. NP. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 6.

performance under the baton of his friend and mentor George Whitefield Chadwick at the New England Conservatory, which would, undoubtedly, have been a triumphant second performance for the piece. In any event, the second performance of *Hora Novissima* was undertaken by the venerable Handel and Haydn Society, one of the more prestigious musical organizations in the nation at that time.

The events leading up to the Society's performance of the work underscore the biases of members of the American musical establishment against native composers, and reaction to the concert, although a landmark in Parker's career and in the performance history of *Hora Novissima*, reinforces the Eurocentric criticism to which American works were subjected at the end of the 19th century and through the prewar years. Of the three types of critical reactions listed above, the general reaction of the Boston critics falls, sometimes begrudgingly, into the first category: *Hora Novissima* as triumph, but triumph tainted by the whiff of scandal.

The scandal surrounding the first performance of *Hora Novissima* in Boston may seem quite tame by 21st-century standards, but it received significant space in both the Boston and New York newspapers during the early months of 1894 and provides clear indicators of the difficulties that Parker and his fellow American composers faced in finding established performers willing to champion their works.¹⁸¹ After the success of the New York premiere, Parker began receiving requests for performances in other cities, and, eventually, other countries. The first performance to be scheduled was the Boston concert by the Handel and Haydn Society, and an excellent quartet of soloists

¹⁸¹ Even given its rave previews, the premiere performance of *Hora Novissima* was by an oratorio society with a contracted orchestra, not the Philharmonic. One wonders if a premiere of a major work by Arthur Sullivan, given his European pedigree, would have drawn more attention from the New York's finest performers.

was hired for the event, including dramatic soprano Lillian Nordica. Nordica was an established performer with New York's Metropolitan Opera Company, but also had a major career in Europe. In short, she was the prototypical American artist of the day: having received the imprimatur of Europe's opera-going public, Nordica was automatically accepted into the highest tier of American artists.¹⁸² It can be safely assumed that those involved with the Boston concert were pleased to have a name of international repute attached to the project, and had Nordica gone through with her contract to sing, it is at least possible that Parker's star would have risen even farther.¹⁸³

In actuality, Lillian Nordica refused to honor her contract with the Handel and Haydn Society. The following notice appeared in the program for the February 4th, 1894 program:

Mrs. Lillian Nordica was engaged early in the autumn to sing in this performance of the *Hora Novissima*, and her name has therefore been included in all our previous announcements this season. On Friday, January 26, she announced her refusal to fulfil the engagement. Miss Emma Juch has been so kind as to undertake the work at this very short notice; and our patrons will doubtless join in the cordial thanks which the society offers Miss Juch for this timely and generous service.¹⁸⁴

Initially, the *Boston Journal* reported that Nordica had taken ill, and would therefore be unable to participate in the Boston performance. A short notice in the January 29th edition indicated that this was plausible, given that she had not performed at the Metropolitan Opera the previous night due to being ill enough to require a doctor's

¹⁸² Known throughout her performing career as Madame (occasionally Mademoiselle) Nordica, she was born Lillian Allen Norton. The oft-told story of her naming states that an unnamed Italian conductor knew she had the requisite skills for a top-level career in opera, but insisted that opera audiences would not accept a name as English as Norton. Even Madame Nordica's name speaks to the Eurocentric nature of American music in the late 19th century.

¹⁸³ Parker did foray into the world of opera in the second decade of the 20th century. It is intriguing to contemplate what he might have accomplished in that realm given Nordica's approbation.

¹⁸⁴ Anonymous, "To Our Public," program notes, Handel and Haydn Society, February 4, 1894. Courtesy of the Archives of the Handel and Haydn Society, Boston, MA.

care.¹⁸⁵ While her physical condition may have legitimately required her to miss several performances on the opera stage, it had little to do with her failure to sing for the Boston performance of *Hora Novissima*. In the same column of the *Journal*, a second dispatch reveals the beginnings of the controversy. An anonymous source, apparently an intimate of the soprano's, is quoted at length, presumably with Nordica's consent, as to the actual nature of her refusal:

"I am compelled," she said, "to answer your question, which I do authoritatively. When Mme. Nordica was engaged to sing for the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston she supposed she would be cast only for the leading role in standard works such as that society has been accustomed to present."¹⁸⁶

By "standard works," of course, Nordica's representative was referring to the established canon of European masters. The essence of her complaint, and therefore her refusal to perform, was that Parker's work was not worthy of her consideration; she would gladly have performed any piece composed by a European.

Both parties to the contract dispute, and their proxies, engaged in a lively back-and-forth in the weeks leading up to the February 4th concert. A short exploration of the brief newspaper battle between Lillian Nordica and Horatio Parker immediately prior to the first Boston performance of *Hora Novissima* is illuminating in several ways. As mentioned above, Nordica's stance on American music is representative of a general attitude prevalent among many musicians of the era, but in that bias is present the seed of a new attitude, that of a nascent American nationalism that would come to fuller fruition in the 20th century. Also, the sheer amount of ink devoted to the circumstances

¹⁸⁵ Anonymous, "Nordica Is Ill," *Boston Journal*, 29 January 1894. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 6.

¹⁸⁶ Anonymous, "Defence of Mme. Nordica," *Boston Journal*, 29 January 1894. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 6.

surrounding the performance of a newer work, albeit a major one by a composer with significant ties to both Boston and New York, is remarkable as a testament to the place of art music in the society of the 1890s.

When Nordica's position was made clear, the Handel and Haydn Society's secretary issued his own response in rapid fashion, stating that he had received notice from Nordica that Parker's work was not suited to her voice, and that she would therefore not be willing to sing it but that she "would consider a standard work,"¹⁸⁷ a recurrent theme in all of her camp's correspondence concerning the issue. Parker was drawn into the fray when reporters, as was the common practice in the era before telephones became widespread, waited at his doorstep on several occasions to ascertain his view of the controversy. He responded to reporters' queries by stating imperiously that Nordica's action in quitting the performance was "not that of an artist;"¹⁸⁸ Parker's comments led to a further response from Nordica's camp and the soprano's real reasons for refusing to sing *Hora Novissima* were clarified in greater detail. Parker, as an untested American composer, was simply not worthy of the already established Nordica name. It is possible that the tense situation could have been resolved in a forum less public than the daily newspaper, but the Boston writers seemed to feel that their city's musical honor had been called into question. Each volley was greeted with significant column space, and given the sheer number of words expended on the affair, it can be safely assumed that the reading public was as caught up in the details surrounding the controversy as the participants. While the intricacies of the Nordica affair are

¹⁸⁷Charles W. Stone, "Mme. Nordica's Position," *Boston Journal*, 30 January 1894. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 6.

¹⁸⁸Anonymous, "How About Hora?," *Boston Journal*, 31 January 1894. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 6.

somewhat beyond the scope of this paper, a review of the trajectory of events leading up to the Boston premiere of *Hora Novissima* serves to underscore the difficulties faced by American composers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Nordica's reply to Parker is a classic exercise in Victorian passive-aggressiveness, and it is worth quoting in its entirety. The view of Parker as a mediocre craftsman aping the works of his (European) betters has its genesis not in the words of critics, but in the gossip pages of a daily newspaper:

"My congratulations to Mr. Parker," she exclaimed, when shown by the Journal correspondent the interview with Mr. Parker which appeared in this evening's Journal, "and my sincere condolence to Miss Juch,¹⁸⁹ who has made many a silk purse of never mind what."¹⁹⁰

"Mr. Parker states that I was in possession of his score last September. Poor man, he seems to have devoted so much time to memorizing the scores of other composers that he can remember nothing else."

"The truth of the matter is," continued Madame Nordica, "that I never received the score of his 'Hora' up to date, until last week, and then not till I had telegraphed for it. Another matter, Mr. Parker graciously condescends to inform not alone the public of Boston, but of New York as well (why will the man send out so many telegrams, I wonder? Surely the public knows me), that I am not an artist, not a musician. Strange that I should have formed exactly the same opinion of Mr. Parker after examining thoroughly 'Hora' up to date."

"Meanwhile, I shall have to take solace in the works of Wagner and Mozart. Never having met or heard of Mr. Parker, I bear him not the slightest ill will, quite the contrary."

"And what is your opinion of Mr. Parker as a composer?" asked the Journal correspondent.

"Before aspiring to be a composer, he should really hear some good music," replied Madame Nordica, "and I should be delighted to offer him this opportunity in Bayreuth next summer. Strangely enough, I have been chosen for the part of Elsa in 'Lohengrin,' Mr. Parker's discovery as to my artistic and musical qualifications notwithstanding.

¹⁸⁹ Emma Juch, the soprano who replaced Nordica on short notice for the Boston performance.

¹⁹⁰ Paragraph breaks are from the original document.

“In conclusion,” said Madame Nordica with a rather decided shrug of her shoulders, “I would say, let Mr. Parker serve his musical omelets with less noise in the future.”¹⁹¹

This verbal warfare, as noted later in the article immediately above, was conducted at a safe distance. With subtle humor, the correspondent responsible for chronicling the mess in Boston noted that the Handel and Haydn Society, and indeed all the principals involved, were enjoying copious amounts of free publicity; advertising that would have been otherwise unavailable.¹⁹²

The publicity provided by the Nordica affair was short-lived enough to be left out of most accounts of *Hora Novissima*’s early years. While her withdrawal from the performance did not have an immediate negative effect on the work’s growing popularity, the overall worldview she represented provides a partial explanation for the failure of Parker’s work to become, using her term, standard. Conjecture is always dangerous, but it is at least possible that the support of established performers of international stature, like Lillian Nordica, could have contributed to an earlier start date for the acceptance of American works into the canon. Instead, Nordica used her position as one of the most well respected singers of her day to reinforce the concept of American musical inferiority. The Nordica affair is merely a symptom, but it does serve to underscore the dichotomy between the excitement of Parker’s (and his fellow New Englanders’) successes and the failure of the established performance culture in America to embrace native composers.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Anonymous, “Sharper Yet,” *Boston Journal*, 31 January 1894. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 6.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ A further illustration is Parker’s opera *Mona*, which was staged at the Metropolitan Opera after winning a major composition prize. It opened to some acclaim, especially from audiences, and closed very shortly thereafter. The Met was, at best, lukewarm on the concept of opera in English (as opposed to

When the Handel and Haydn Society finally performed the work, the concert was a clear success, but response was somewhat more divided than the reaction to the New York premiere had been. The same critical doubts that would come to dominate later opinion are more manifest in the writings of the Boston reviewers than they had been in New York: that *Hora Novissima* was more erudite and well-crafted than inspired. As in New York, Parker's excellence as both melodist and contrapuntist are singled out for particular praise, and his orchestrations are (sometimes in rather confusing fashion) alternately lauded for their richness and variety and chided for their bombast.

The unnamed critic for the *Boston Herald* was effusive in his praise, declaring that Parker was thought by his peers in Munich to be the "most facile contrapuntist in the whole Rheinberger lot,"¹⁹⁴ immediately tying excellence in composition to European pedigree. He further declared *Hora Novissima* to be worthy of many more performances, and express, rather fervently, a desire to hear the work performed in Boston again as soon as forces can be assembled. He went to particular lengths to describe the piece's worth in terms of its potential to have great staying power, both as an addition to performing repertoire and as a composition well written enough to command the attention of students and lovers of great music.¹⁹⁵

One critic described the work as "meritorious, but not phenomenal," citing the monotony of the rhythm of the original poem as a failing of the work.¹⁹⁶ It will be

Italian in particular), and opera by an American composer made for great headlines but had little potential for significant box office receipts.

¹⁹⁴ Anonymous, "Music Hall: Handel and Haydn Society," *Boston Record*, 5 February 1894. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 6.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Louis C. Elson, "Hora Novissima," *Boston Advertiser*, 5 February, 1894. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 6.

remembered that several other critics had singled out Parker's ability to surmount the challenge of the static rhythm in Bernard's poem as a signal strength of the piece; dichotomies of this nature typify reaction to the work even down to the 21st century. The same critic, writing for the *Boston Gazette*, did grant that Parker's work held a "certain originality;"¹⁹⁷ this, of course, stands in stark contrast to some critics' assertions that *Hora Novissima* was, in Lillian Nordica's unkind term, a musical "omelet" consisting of ideas cribbed from other composers. The problematic nature of a clear assessment of the piece becomes more evident further into the same *Gazette* review, especially when compared to a later review, in a different Boston daily, of the piece that ran on the Sunday after the performance.

The critic for the *Gazette*, writing on the day after the Boston performance, made oblique reference to the Nordica affair by noting that *Hora Novissima* was "a work which no mere singer may cast aside with a disdainful verdict formed out of an experience made up of trill-studies, high C's and applause-exciting effects."¹⁹⁸ That said, he proceeded to assess the piece as competent, scholarly, and possessing strong moments, but lacking the requisite strengths of greatness. Essentially, Parker had penned a solid effort and a promising one, but he displayed too much of his erudition and training at the expense of artistry. His real opinion is summed up in a fashion typical of the criticism of the day:

One could wish that Mr. Parker could ripen in European soil. If he does ripen, as is foreshadowed by this work he will by and by care more for melody and less for pedantic learning; he will master his knowledge rather than allow his knowledge to master him; and the result will be a set of compositions less

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

wonderful and more beautiful, less carefully planned and more directly inspired; and then he will be the greatest composer that America has produced.¹⁹⁹

The alternation of high praise with a strong strain of Eurocentric paternalism is a pattern that will maintain through the course of critical history of *Hora Novissima*.

The critic for the *Boston Courier*, writing on the Sunday following the performance, agreed with some of the *Gazette* reviewer's thoughts concerning the exuberance of youth demonstrating itself through Parker's consistent use of counterpoint and heavier orchestration. He also concurred with the earlier reviewer's opinion that *Hora Novissima* was a work that showed great promise, stating that "his [Parker's] faults are chiefly those of exuberance and the natural desire of ambitious youth" and that "the contribution of his score to American musical literature should be chronicled as an event and the future will require of him a fair fulfillment of the expectation it arouses."²⁰⁰ This critic makes no mention of the working being overly derivative, and he marks with a mixture of admiration and disappointment Parker's gifts as a melodic writer: it is evident that he indeed possesses a great talent for melodic composition, but the reviewer for the *Courier* felt that this gift was underutilized in relation to a seemingly excessive use of thematic transformation, counterpoint, and overall learnedness.²⁰¹ The *Courier* reviewer sums up his opinion:

The main thing, after all, is that his work is as a whole noble, beautiful, varied, sensitive, poetic, rhapsodical, stately, learned, modest, free, courageous and triumphant. It demonstrates that its composer comprehends climax and can command it, whether in the sure soaring of one voice, or the gradual expansion of a choir or in the accretion of instrumental tones; that he recognizes the value of pathos and mystery, and that, in spite of ambition and the consciousness of

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Anonymous, "'Hora Novissima' at the Handel and Haydn Chamber Concerts, etc.," *Boston Courier*, 11 February 1894. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 6.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

resource, he is not wasteful of his means nor inclined to weaken an effect by its repetition.²⁰²

The Boston reviews seem, in general, to hold both work and composer in high esteem and in great suspicion, showing that uniquely American disdain for those who show excessive learning and yet being desirous of a product that gives evidence of a greatness of skill and talent that is generally only evident following a solid, lengthy education.

Most of the early reviews of *Hora Novissima*, both in New York and in Boston, show patterns of excess, in hopefulness for the future of both American music and Parker's career, in reticence to thoroughly laud a composer so young and so American, and in lavish praise for his effort. The three central topics of criticism mentioned at the beginning of this chapter are all very much in evidence, even at this early stage: within the first two performances, the piece was lauded as masterwork, chided for derivativeness, and accused of an excess of craft used to mask a lack of inspiration. Many of the critics seemed unsure as to how to approach a composer of Parker's obvious caliber and training (complete with the requisite European pedigree, albeit from one of the more conservative lineages) who was so very American. Lillian Nordica's response to the opportunity offered her to perform a major work by an American is instructive, as is Henry Krehbiel's (and others) wishful praise of both composer and piece. *Hora Novissima* clearly had its champions, including renowned conductor Theodore Thomas, who chose the work for the Cincinnati May Festival shortly after its premiere, but acceptance of a large-scale American composition by the art music

²⁰² Ibid.

establishment on both sides of the Atlantic required greater approbation, namely of the European variety.

England

Early reaction to *Hora Novissima* in the English press followed the same basic pattern as that of the earliest American reviewers: exuberance, gentle remonstrations regarding the work's perceived derivativeness, and hopefulness for even greater achievements from a promising young composer. Several of the earliest reactions, including demands for the piece to be performed in England as soon as the forces could be gathered²⁰³, are mentioned in the introduction to this chapter; the following section includes later critical reception of the work, after performances in England had taken place.

Regardless of early and vociferous calls for an English performance, it was 1899, six years after the world premiere, before *Hora Novissima* was finally heard on the other side of the Atlantic. When the English premiere came, however, it was in the most prominent of venues for large-scale choral-orchestral works: the venerable Three Choirs Festival, which has seen the premieres of pieces by luminaries including Felix Mendelssohn, Charles Villiers Stanford, and Edward Elgar, among others. When the festival, which alternates between the cathedral cities of Worcester, Hereford, and Gloucester in a three-year cycle (and has done so since the 18th century), came to Worcester in 1899, Ivor Atkins,²⁰⁴ organist of the Worcester Cathedral, chose to include *Hora Novissima* in the program. This performance marks not only the English premiere

²⁰³ One such call, in the July 22, 1893 edition of the *London Musical Standard*, while mentioning *Hora Novissima*'s worthiness for performance by English choral societies, introduces yet another whiff of derivativeness in noting that the "cantata is full of Spohrish sweetness and grace." Henry Knight, "American Composers," *London Musical Standard*, 22 July 1893. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 6.

²⁰⁴ Atkins served as organist/choirmaster at Worcester Cathedral for over fifty years. His choice to program *Hora Novissima* was particularly daring, as the 1899 festival was the first one that was under his direction.

of the work; it marks the first time that any work by an American composer had been performed at the festival.

The importance of this inclusion cannot be overestimated: a correspondent for the *Musical Times* noted that he believed the performance to be “the first ‘open door’ offered to an American composer,” and that “no worthier entrant could be found than the composer of ‘Hora Novissima.’” The level of compositional skill required for performance on this, generally considered among the most prominent (and oldest) of the world’s music festivals, is evidenced not only in the litany of oratorio masterworks performed, but also in the other premieres associated with the Three Choirs. One of the more notable of these was the premiere of Edward Elgar’s *Enigma Variations*, which, though not a choral work, was first performed at the Three Choirs Festival in Worcester in the same year as *Hora Novissima*.

The Worcester performance was covered in many of the principal news organs of the British press as well as the major music journals of the day. The special correspondent for the *London Daily News* devoted two full columns of print to the concert which featured *Hora Novissima*; the majority of that space was taken up in a review of both the composition itself and the actual performance.²⁰⁵ In what was fast becoming a familiar refrain, the *Daily News* critic makes prominent mention of Parker’s ability to assimilate styles, referring in particular to stylistic elements pointing to Schubert, Gounod, Beethoven and Dvořák. He does not enumerate any specific points in the music that call to mind these composers, leaving his criticism somewhat generic

²⁰⁵ Anonymous, “Worcester Music Festival: An American Oratorio: Professor Parker’s ‘Hora Novissima,’” *London Daily News*, 15 September 1899. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 30, Folder 15.

and certainly incomplete. He does call attention to the (very obvious) quotation from Mendelssohn's "Wedding March," but notes that its placement near a passage dealing with Christ as bridegroom proves its inclusion as an intentional, perhaps even tongue-in-cheek, reference to the work.²⁰⁶ As with many other critics, the writer for the *Daily News* is most pleased with Parker's fugal writing and his ability to handle large choral forces, citing specifically "Pars mea, rex meus," the fourth movement, as an example of the former and the double-chorus writing in "Stant Syon atria," the eighth movement as an instance of the latter. The reviewer also seems particularly pleased that, ostensibly unlike "so many of the younger generation on both sides of the Atlantic," Parker has avoided becoming an imitator of Wagner, the composer whose "style bears imitating least of all the great musicians."²⁰⁷ It would seem that within one paragraph, this critic has noted Parker's apparent derivativeness and praised his originality, continuing the dichotomous trend of critics' inability to determine whether Parker's writing is fresh or stale, as already seen in the earlier American reviewers' writing on *Hora Novissima*. In a similar vein, the same critic points out perceived weaknesses in the solo writing, specifically the "fragmentary nature" of the tenor solo and the "meaningless alternations" of meter in the bass solo while singling out the alto solo for praise; other critics, as cited above, presented an opposite opinion, calling out the tenor solo for particular praise while lambasting the alto solo as poorly written.²⁰⁸

The *Daily News* reviewer closes his article by noting the excellent attendance for the performance of *Hora Novissima* (which was coupled with a newly edited version of

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

a Palestrina *Stabat Mater*): 2380 patrons heard the concert, very nearly a record for ticket sales for a Thursday concert at the festival.²⁰⁹ The end of the 19th century marks an interesting border: before the complete calcification of the canon of art music, novelty was still prized enough to draw a large audience, but the inclusion of Palestrina as a sort of musical insurance policy lent the patina of historic greatness to the performance.

The review published in the *Daily Chronicle* contains further accusations of excessive derivativeness, stating baldly that the music of *Hora Novissima* “oscillates between Gounod and Dvorak and that the score offers “nothing remarkable, except the appearance of being much older than it really is.”²¹⁰ In essence, the piece is damned for allegedly following ground already well-trod; the growing tension between novelty and accepted, inherited, and canonized works is becoming more apparent that it was in the earliest reactions to the piece. There is a hint of melancholy in this reviewer’s writing, as if he, too, was hoping that *Hora Novissima* would be a breakthrough work that established America’s credentials as a musical power. He does seem pleased that a large-scale American work received a prominent performance: something “considerably in advance of the march and dance tunes that have crossed the Atlantic and become so popular.”²¹¹

The *Athenaeum*, a weekly literary magazine, levelled now-familiar charges against *Hora Novissima*, noting the “strong influence of Mendelssohn, Gounod, and

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Anonymous Review, “Worcester Festival: A Sacred Work from America Personally Conducted,” *London Daily Chronicle*, 15 September 1899. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 30, Folder 15.

²¹¹ Ibid.

Dvoràk, of which many can be found in his music.”²¹² This critic sees great potential in Parker’s writing, noting several times how young the composer is and how much younger he was when he wrote *Hora Novissima*. He also praises Parker’s straightforwardness, writing that “the absence of all straining after effect in the ‘Hora Novissima’ deserves notice.”²¹³ This, again, stands in contrast to some previous reviewers who noted a sense of bombast in Parker’s style that they considered a distraction from the severity of the text. Indeed, within the confines of the same article, the *Athenaeum*’s reviewer contradicts himself by coming to a similar conclusion, noting that the final movement of the work is “unduly spun out.”²¹⁴ He also furthers the lack of consensus concerning Parker’s solo writing, praising the tenor and bass solos that were lambasted by other London critics while echoing several of the American critics’ doubts about the success of the alto solo. Perhaps most telling with regard to the near complete lack of critical consensus surrounding *Hora Novissima* is the reviewer’s dislike of “Urbs Syon unica,” the a cappella chorus so highly praised on the other side of the Atlantic.²¹⁵ As in other contemporary reviews, the amount of type expended on *Hora Novissima* illustrates how significant an event the Three Choirs premiere was and how hopeful (if bemusedly so) the English musical establishment was that Parker was in the vanguard of a major expansion in the quality of American music making.

Consistent themes emerge throughout the reviews of the English premiere of *Hora Novissima*, particularly an air of hopefulness for Parker’s future as a composer

²¹² Anonymous review, “The Week: The Worcester Music Festival,” *The Athenaeum*, No. 3752, 23 September 1899. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 30, Folder 15.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

(based on the musical evidence of *Hora Novissima*), and by extension a seemingly sincere hope for the future of American music in general. English reviewers were generally quite impressed with Parker as a conductor,²¹⁶ and many seemed to admire his ability to take in disparate influences and recreate them in his own voice. The mentions (or accusations) of derivative writing appear in several forms: one noting that some imitation is a hallmark of the early stages of a great artist's work, another assuming that Parker's intent was to call moments from familiar works to mind (see the Wedding March quote mentioned above), or that a sense of familiarity is unavoidable in the work of so well-trained a musician. In an untitled, undated, and uncredited press clipping from the Horatio Parker Papers at Yale University, the writer W.J. Shaxby (perhaps best known for his anti-union writings) aptly describes the reasoning of the third camp, noting that an American composer schooled in Germany and well-versed in the style popular with English choral societies would be "unable to escape a reminiscent touch here and there in his works."²¹⁷ Some critics, however, find more than a touch of the work of others in Parker's output; general consensus appears to be that his use of pre-existing materials or ideas is too overt to be accidental, and certainly too prominent a feature of his writing to be considered anything but completely intentional.²¹⁸

²¹⁶ After observing an early rehearsal for the Three Choirs concert, and observer writing for the *Worcestershire Chronicle* was particularly impressed with Parker's command presence, his attention to detail, and his sense of humor. Several other writers made similar observations and were likewise impressed. Anonymous, "Notes By [*sic.*] Observer," *Worcestershire Chronicle*, 26 August, 1899. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 30, Folder 15.

²¹⁷ Shaxby, W.J., Unlabeled newspaper review of a performance of Parker's *The Wanderer's Psalm*, likely from 1900 or 1901. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 30, Folder 15.

²¹⁸ Parker's piano miniatures provide a good example of his conscious use of thematic material from other composers. They are clearly conceived to call to mind immediately the works of specific composers, including Mendelssohn who is mentioned quite prominently as an obvious influence on *Hora Novissima*.

The Early 20th Century²¹⁹

Hora Novissima had, in the New York, Boston, and Three Choirs performances, three major events over the first decade of its existence that served to introduce the work to important critics and conductors in the United State and in England. These premiere concerts were all followed by bursts of interest in the piece, and further concerts took place in New York, Boston, Cincinnati, Ann Arbor, Washington, D.C., and London within ten years of the world premiere; this is no small feat for the work of a young American composer previously known principally as an organist and writer of church service music.²²⁰ That a work of the size and scope of *Hora Novissima* received so many performances seems, at minimum, a testament to Parker's ability to write a piece that thoroughly fit the desires of the conductors working at the turn of the last century. The performances did not dry up as the 20th century began, however; it seemed for a time that *Hora Novissima* might have found the place in the long-term performance repertory that had thus far eluded nearly all American compositions.

With the work now more firmly established and no longer a novelty, the criticism surrounding it takes on an ever less urgent character, which provides a less partisan view of the piece. In essence, performances of *Hora Novissima*, while never divorced from an insistent need to use "American" as a modifier before both composer and piece, become frequent enough for a small body of reasonably dispassionate commentary to be established.

²¹⁹ While technically a part of the 19th century, performances and critiques from 1900 are included in this section.

²²⁰ It is possible that his reputation as a church musician hampered the acceptance of his later attempts at opera and other genres.

Much of the critical reception to *Hora Novissima* after the turn of the century follows the same pattern as previous writing on the work. A good example (although technically still in the 19th century) is a passing remark on *Hora Novissima* in a review of Parker's *Adstant Angelorum Chori* found in the *Musical Times* of London, which in essence states that Parker's writing is excellent, but that much more is expected²²¹ of him.²²² The requisite comments marveling at the existence of musical excellence on the other side of the Atlantic are, of course, present as well, but more as a reflexive afterthought than out of genuine surprise.

The Chester Music Festival, held triennially, featured a performance touted as the introduction of *Hora Novissima* to the north of England on July 27, 1900. The special correspondent for the *Liverpool Mercury* penned what is perhaps the most singularly glowing and effusive review of *Hora Novissima*; it stands in contrast to the more measured tone of the London and Boston critics. Seemingly freed from the concerns of needful novelty that litter several of the earlier reviewers, the *Mercury's* correspondent reacts to the piece viscerally, without the references to other composers that feature so prominently in other critics' assessments. According to the *Mercury*, Parker has "a supreme command of rhythm, a great gift of melody, and remarkably power of homogeneous consolidation."²²³ The reviewer notes Parker's control of

²²¹ This is a common refrain in English criticism generally, and in the *Musical Times* specifically. See the previously referenced articles on Parker in the October, 1893 and February, 1899 issues of the *Times*.

²²² The critic writing feels that *Adstant Angelorum Chori* displays evidence of a successful evolution toward dignity and terseness in Parker's writing. He cannot help but point out Parker's tendency to borrow, citing a "Brahmsism" evident in a portion of the work. Anonymous Review, "Adstant Angelorum Chori," *The Musical Times*, 1 March 1900. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 30, Folder 15.

²²³ Anonymous Review, "Chester Music Festival: Third and Final Day. Parker's 'Hora Novissima' Pergosis' 'Transfiguration,'" *Liverpool Mercury*, 28 July 1900. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 30, Folder 15.

climax with admiration: "...from first to last the writing, although the oratorio often scales the highest heights, is singularly lucid, a maximum effect being achieved with apparently but a minimum of effort."²²⁴ While some previous reviewers expressed similar approbation, and several mentioned above even praise Parker's originality of style (in, of course, direct contradiction to those who saw too much resemblance to others), few critics approach the outright declarations of greatness found in this review:

It was a pleasure of the most positive kind to follow the working out of the choral and instrumental components of the oratorio. In the independence and the wedding of these there is made manifest the author's profound scholarship, while again the spontaneity of genius is speedily perceived. "*Hora Novissima*" is devoid of the slightest taint of the commonplace; it conveys no suggestion of a reflex of influence. The [*sic.*] rather does one of its claims to ungrudging acknowledgement rest upon its absolute individuality, and individuality broad, virile, and poetic."²²⁵

"We stand confessed in the presence of a master of his art,"²²⁶ raves the *Liverpool Mercury* critic. *Hora Novissima* is "utterly free from conventionality" and "vividly touched by originality in every bar."²²⁷ Before his final exhortation to the Philharmonic Society of Liverpool to include the piece on their next season, the *Mercury* reviewer renders his final judgment: "'*Hora Novissima*' [*sic.*] is a work that is destined to endurance."²²⁸ A final note on this article: it is one of the only reviews that neglects to mention Parker's American background. The review was of the performance and the work; here is an example of slowly growing acceptance of American musicians as peers to Europeans (at least in England).

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

It would seem that the *Mercury's* critic was correct with regard to endurance, as performances of *Hora Novissima* continued with regularity for some time. The Festival Choral Society of Birmingham performed the work on February 23, 1905, to generally good notices. The *Birmingham Gazette and Express*, while noting strong streams of influence in Parker's writing, also notes that "from first to last there is sound musicianship, refinement, beauty, and a sufficient savour [sic.] of individuality."²²⁹ This last comment might be considered among the most commonly held opinions of Parker's writing: derivative in the sense of a listener being able to trace a line of ancestry in much of Parker's compositional output and in that he makes clear decisions to make overt references to the work of others throughout his career, but original in its employment of those materials. Parker's particularly deft skill in creating massive and effective climactic moments is again singled out for praise, with the *Gazette and Express* reviewer describing the final chorus as brilliant and nearly overwhelming in power and splendor. Parker's skill as contrapuntist is also highlighted again; the lone a cappella movement "Urbs Syon unica" is praised for both its beauty and its difficulty. The audience's reaction affirms the critic's. "Urbs Syon unica" received "long-sustained" applause mid-performance.²³⁰

Similarly, the reviewer for the *Birmingham Daily Post* notes both scholarship and poetic feeling in *Hora Novissima*, and he extends a particular pardon to Parker for unconsciously absorbing the ideas of others, especially as *Hora Novissima* is a work of youth. Like other critics, he is quick to note that "there is enough individuality to give

²²⁹ Anonymous Review, "American Music: A First Performance in Birmingham," *Birmingham Gazette and Express*, 24 February 1905. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 30, Folder 15.

²³⁰ Ibid.

the work value;” unlike several other critics, he sees no long-term future for the piece due to its arcane theme.²³¹ Countering the opinion of the work’s esoteric text as off-putting, the reviewer for the *Birmingham Daily Mail* notes that the poem that forms the basis for *Hora Novissima* is well-known in England as the source of several popular hymns²³² and that the piece “appeals at once to the listener; it interests him and that interest is kept until the final chord is struck.”²³³ As if to further underscore the multiplicity of gradations regarding originality in *Hora Novissima*, the critic for the *Daily Mail* makes mention of “freshness and attractive originality;” in a previous paragraph he noted the presence of “Gounod-like phrases that carry with them a soupcon of ‘Faust’ before stating (in the same sentence) that *Hora Novissima* is “a delightful work of original conception.”²³⁴

The reviewers of the Birmingham performance provide an excellent microcosm of the critical consensus slowly building around *Hora Novissima*, namely that of a distinct inability to judge the work according to the norms of the day due to its mixture of originality and derivativeness. The text of Bernard’s poem also provides an impediment to critical opinion, as critics find it lacking in dramatic appeal and are unsure how to judge Parker’s text setting of the unyielding hexameter present throughout the poem. The critic for the *Daily Post* cites these reasons, the (perceived) lack of dramatic narrative and the archaic metric scheme of the text, as reasons for

²³¹ Anonymous Review, “Festival Choral Society,” *Birmingham Daily Post*, 24 February 1905. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 30, Folder 15.

²³² It should be noted that Parker, seemingly consciously, avoided setting those sections of *De contemptu mundi* that provided, in translation, those hymns.

²³³ Anonymous Review, “Birmingham Festival Choral Society: Dr. Horatio Parker’s ‘Hora Novissima,’” *Birmingham Daily Mail*, 24 February 1905. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 30, Folder 15.

²³⁴ Ibid.

Parker's tendency toward apparent archaisms in the piece, notably the fugal writing and the employment of techniques reminiscent of Palestrina.²³⁵ The same critic does note that Parker's orchestrations, harmonic language, and free employment of different styles of counterpoint point to a highly skilled composer of modern bent.²³⁶ As with other, earlier, reviews, the volume of verbiage expended in reviewing *Hora Novissima* is a testament to the piece's perceived importance. This is especially true in the instance of the Birmingham concert, and the other work on the performance that evening was the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven, which received comparatively scant mention in the performance reviews.²³⁷

²³⁵ Anonymous Review, "Festival Choral Society," *Birmingham Daily Post*, 24 February 1905. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 30, Folder 15.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ It is likely that the Beethoven work was already familiar enough to audiences as to require little formal description.

Changing Times and Tastes

After the first decade of the 20th century, as the world approached crisis in the form of the First World War, writing about Parker's no-longer-new piece subsided; performances still occurred at a good pace until just before the war, but the major critics had their plates full in slinging vitriol back and forth regarding composers like Stravinsky and Schoenberg. Postwar, as performances begin to occur less frequently, analytical and anecdotal writing begins to take precedence over performance reviews. *Hora Novissima* becomes a part of the historical record rather than a "new" work. There are likely several reasons for this, ranging from the changing tastes of music critics, to disenchantment with the celestial musings of Bernard as irrelevant to a world shattered by an essentially meaningless war, to economics and the desire to stick to the tried-and-true in order to insure financial viability. There is also the backlash that occurred against all things German during the war to consider; this changed the accent of Eurocentric American music from German to French. These shifts did not, of course, obliterate the now fast-calcifying canon, they merely made it more difficult for newer works to be accepted. While now a piece with a historical pedigree, *Hora Novissima* was certainly not canonical. Nor was it cutting edge in any recognizable way, and it did bear the handprints of Parker's German schooling, especially in its employment of counterpoint. The piece may have ascended had war and severe societal upheaval not intervened, forever changing the way in which music functions in society, the materials employed in its composition, and the manner in which music is critiqued. Any such thoughts are entirely conjectural, of course. In the event, *Hora Novissima* and its composer faded rather rapidly from the national scene following the First World War

and any criticism of piece or composer either became tinged with almost excessive nostalgia (in the case of most Parker students, friends, and family members) or colored more by the contemporary musical climate than any in-depth study of the score. The study of earlier American music, those pieces written before the ascendancy of serial, experimental, and jazz-derived works, tends to present a view of American art music as derivative of its European exemplars to the point that it need not be considered apart from them; indeed general consensus seems to be that the generation of Americans who trained in Germany in the late 19th century are worthy of study only as they relate to their teachers or students (i.e. Chadwick and Parker as students of Rheinberger, Burleigh as student of Dvořák, Parker as teacher of Ives, etc.).²³⁸ There is, therefore, somewhat less in the way of scholarly criticism of *Hora Novissima* than its early successes might have predicted. As the number of performances slowed, press notices, too, became infrequent, resulting in lengthy gaps in both performance and critical histories of the work.

²³⁸ With notable exceptions for more folk-derived styles, including New England Psalmody, Blackface Minstrelsy, music of the Civil War, etc.

The 1930s and 1940s

With the exception of George Whitefield Chadwick's extended eulogy, which was printed as a pocket-sized book, the earliest treatment of Parker's career was written by David Stanley Smith in the *Musical Quarterly's* April, 1930 issue²³⁹ – just over a decade after the composer's death. While Smith's 10-page article, and its accompanying appendices listing Parker's catalogue of works, provides an excellent starting point for the transition from reviews of a recent composer's still-somewhat-current work to the more academic, dispassionate approach that can only come with the passage of time, there is a significant limitation to Smith's piece: he was one of Parker's most cherished students. Indeed, David Stanley Smith followed Parker as the chair of music at Yale. While that makes him a logical choice for a eulogy or nostalgic character study, it also requires that readers take care: Smith's writing, while erudite and authoritative, largely falls into the nostalgia category mentioned above.

Following a brief, picturesque homage to the members of the Second New England School (by his reckoning this group includes Chadwick, Foote, MacDowell, Whiting, Parker, and Paine – Beach is notably absent) which describes a generation which “dared to peep out of the choir loft of the New England meeting-house,”²⁴⁰ Smith recounts the story of Parker's life, stopping to dwell on *Hora Novissima* as “by far the most important of Parker's works of his early period, and one of the most important in the whole range of American music.”²⁴¹

²³⁹ David Stanley Smith, “A Study of Horatio Parker,” *The Musical Quarterly*, 16/2, April, 1930, 152-169. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 33.

²⁴⁰ Ibid. 153.

²⁴¹ Ibid. 156. In this description of *Hora Novissima* can be seen a continuation of the critical stream that considers the work to be a masterpiece. This stream begins to dry up shortly thereafter.

Smith praises not only the composition, but its longevity in the repertoire, providing perhaps the clearest evidence of his bias toward his mentor's work. By 1930, the continued rise of popular styles of music, the societal shifts brought about by the First World War and its aftermath, and the sudden impact of the Great Depression, among other factors, had changed the musical tastes of Americans. Parker's music (and that of Smith) was not disliked so much as rendered less relevant. Possessing neither the patina of the ancient nor the sheen of the novel, it simply began to fade into obscurity, though never completely. Smith himself was an emblem of a bygone era, not even a full generation younger than his teacher, and may have been projecting his wishes for the work, rather than attempting to accurately assess its place.

In an interesting statement, given the typical criticism of *Hora Novissima* as being excessively derivative, Smith posits that the work's popularity is due to its presenting Parker's distinctive style coherently for the first time; in essence *Hora Novissima* is the first of his mature works:²⁴² As with other reviewers before him, Smith singles out Parker's singularity of style; this, of course, contrasts starkly with those who find too much of other composers' stylistic traits in the piece:

His originality – “*Hora Novissima*” is very original – is the more striking in that repetition of treatment has not yet set in. The melody and part-writing are particularly fascinating, and the sentiment, which lies midway between the celestial and human, responds naturally to the feeling of the thoughtful listener.²⁴³

Smith's high praise marks one of the final pieces of critical writing (biased thought it may be) that praises Parker's works without caveat. Given his age (Smith was born in 1877) and personal connection to Parker, it is difficult to place Smith's article in the

²⁴² Ibid. 158.

²⁴³ Ibid.

category of later criticism; it seems, both in style and substance, to belong to the prewar era.

If David Stanley Smith's writing marks the end of one school of Parker criticism, an article by Edward Robinson, appearing, as if in direct response to Smith's, in the April, 1931 issue of the *American Mercury*,²⁴⁴ heralds a new direction in responding to the work of almost all earlier American composers, that of derision. Robinson's writing practically seethes with disdain for Parker's compositions, and he singles out *Hora Novissima* for particular damnation, claiming that "it is the dulllest kind of music, following the conventional church style in a way made familiar, and contemptible, by hundreds of unimaginative predecessors."²⁴⁵ Describing the "singular folly" of 19th-century American music as best exemplified by Parker, and writing in what might be described as an early attempt at Marxist criticism,²⁴⁶ Robinson is as biased against the genteel, professorial class of composer represented by Parker as Smith was toward it.

Robinson, himself a composer, found Parker's entire catalogue to be anachronistic to the point of ridiculousness, painting the elder composer as a reactionary trying to stem the tide of musical modernity by consciously writing in a manner already

²⁴⁴ The *American Mercury*, founded by H.L. Mencken, was a reputable, if edgy, periodical in this era. The Mencken-era magazine is not to be confused with the later anti-Semitic publication that retained the name, but not the quality-control standards or political bent, of the original.

²⁴⁵ Edward Robinson, "Horatio W. Parker," *The American Mercury*, XXII/88, April, 1931, 497-505. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 33.

²⁴⁶ Descriptions of music as an artifact of and a possession of the people, rather than the purview of a few artists surface throughout Robinson's piece. An example of the viewpoint from which he is writing: "It [music] is an instrument of which voices the common aspirations of a whole body of people, not the insignificant desires of a few querulous members; and its successful negotiation occurs only when the artist is able to identify his purely personal wants with the common cultural ideals of the group." Ibid. 497.

considered archaic in its own time, especially with regard to harmony and text choice.²⁴⁷ Some of the earliest criticisms of *Hora Novissima* mention Parker's tendency toward more conservative harmonic language, but those writers tended to assume that Parker's employment of fairly standard harmonic schemes was a conscious one, based on personal preference and an astute knowledge of the performing forces most likely to present his works, namely amateur (although talented) choral societies. Robinson's overall view of Parker's output can serve as a summation of his criticism of *Hora Novissima*:

All of his music is well-written, conventional stuff, showing very fair skill in handling voices. But the rhythmic structure is weak, vague and wandering; the melodies are of amiable banality, even at their best; and the harmonic scheme is childishly obvious, with occasional exceptions when, attempting to be modern, it becomes stupidly confused, strained and illogical. Each of his works is practically the same as every other, in that they manifest an astonishing ability to recall almost every composer, from Palestrina to Brahms, who ever wrote.²⁴⁸

Conscious borrowing, as presented in earlier criticism, has become plagiarism in the eyes of Robinson (and others): "heavy, pious, lugubrious stuff, unbelievably derivative and reminiscent."²⁴⁹ After these vivid denunciations, Robinson presents his real reasoning for despising the music of Parker (and, by extension, his contemporaries): the incongruity of pious, otherworldly music based on medieval Latin poetry being written in an era that also contained the Pullman strikes, union busting, and other major, quite earthly societal upheavals. Robinson's critique, as with a great deal of arts criticism of all kinds that follows over the course of the 20th century, is, in some ways, more about politics and music's role in society than it is about music. Even the severe reaction to

²⁴⁷ Ibid. 499.

²⁴⁸ Ibid. 498.

²⁴⁹ Ibid. 499.

Parker's use of earlier models has its roots in the musical politics of the early 1930s, as staunchly tonal composers, especially those who attempted to steadfastly adhere to the lushness of high post-romanticism, were considered by the artistic intelligentsia to be representatives of a tired, outmoded sort of bourgeois art that should have died with the Russian revolution. Worth quoting at length again, Robison sums up his polemic on Parker thusly:

It does not require much perception to realize that this kind of thing did not serve to advance the cause of American music. Rather, it but emphasized in the minds of the American people their previous conviction that music was an idle and useless form of diversion, wholly unrelated to the profounder aspects of their lives. Parker was all too conclusive a proof of their belief; and if American society is to blame for anything, it must be for the undue generosity with which it tolerated his activities. For already it is obvious that he received far more recognition than his music ever deserved.²⁵⁰

Parker never quite obtained the level of obscurity so strongly desired by Edward Robinson; both the increase in interest in the cultural history of the United States and the broad appeal of *Hora Novissima* conspired to ensure occasional performances of Parker's music through the remainder of the century.

Although certainly biased and never intended to be scholarly in bent, Isabel Parker Semler's memoir²⁵¹ of her father's life provides some important insight into *Hora Novissima* from an author as close to the composer as anyone aside from his wife. Semler's book is more useful for biographical information and an interesting character sketch of Parker through his family's eyes, but its publication date of 1942 does help fill in the gap between the early 1930s and the early 1950s. Information gleaned from the

²⁵⁰ Ibid. 501.

²⁵¹ Isabel Semler Parker and Pierson Underwood, *Horatio Parker: A Memoir for his Grandchildren compiled from Letters and Papers*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1942.

Semler book features prominently in the brief biographical chapter found earlier in this document.

Semler's book notes, via Parker's diary, the first mention of *Hora Novissima* in writing, so it is known that Parker was working on the piece as early as April of 1891 and scored it almost precisely one year later.²⁵² It is Semler's book that provides us with other important information regarding the circumstances surrounding the work's genesis, namely the profound sense of mourning and loss in Parker's life at the time: he lost, within the space of the year spent writing *Hora Novissima*, his grandmother, father, sister, and a baby boy.²⁵³ This information casts a different light on Edward Robinson's complaints above concerning the otherworldly bent of *Hora Novissima*. It is possible that, like countless composers before him, Parker was writing through his grief, using composing as therapy.

The cataclysm of the Second World War and the sea change in American society that followed it rapidly placed Parker's generation of composers at an even further remove. Something more than the passage of time created a distinct feeling of disconnection to the Victorian/Edwardian world. War on a massive scale sped up advances in technology. Parker and Chadwick may have seemed as out of place and archaic in the atomic age as Palestrina seemed to their own era. The work of the Second New England school was once again relegated to a new status, that of quirky museum piece. Along with preserving the visible reminders of earlier eras (steam locomotives, starched collars, straw boater hats, etc.), historians began to give thought

²⁵² Semler does a great service in providing typed accounts of her father's handwritten diaries. The diaries themselves, and they are largely diaries in the British sense, meaning datebooks, are kept in the Horatio Parker Papers at Yale University. Ibid. 77.

²⁵³ Ibid. 79.

to means of preserving earlier music in meaningful ways. The somewhat ironic choice for such acts of preservation was sound recording.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁴ The irony lies in recorded music's triumph over the earlier culture of live performance that dominated the era in which Parker lived. A technology that contributed to the massive explosion of popular forms of American music and to the calcification of a canon of Western art music would now be employed as a means of preserving, in a plastic format, the works of the composers displaced from the repertoire, at least partly, by recordings.

The 1950s and 1960s

As of this writing, there are only two commercially available recordings of *Hora Novissima*: a 1994 release by Albany Records, still in print, featuring the Nebraska Wesleyan University Choir and the Abendmusik Chorus under John Levick, and a 1953 recording featuring the American Recording Society Orchestra and Chorus conducted by William Strickland. The 1953 recording has been released and re-released in several guises²⁵⁵; these can be found in used record stores and through various online resources. The 1953 album, which also featured a piece called *Ford's Theater*, by Chicago composer Ernst Bacon, provides one of the few prominent public mentions of *Hora Novissima* during the 1950s, namely a review of the record in the *New York Times*. Like Edward Robinson, John Briggs, the classical records critic for the *Times*, wears his musical politics on his sleeve. Briggs notes the composers on the recordings are “unashamed melodists” and that “unfortunately this stamps them as out-of-season composers at the present time, when the Viennese atonalists have swept all before them.”²⁵⁶

The American Recording Society, functioning through a grant of the Alice M. Ditson Fund²⁵⁷ of Columbia University, attempted to revive neglected (but worthy) compositions and to champion newer works. In that vein, this commercial recording of

²⁵⁵ One of these reprints mistakenly identifies the orchestra on the recording as the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. While the recording was, indeed, made in Vienna, and the American Recording Society likely used players from the Vienna Symphony and the Vienna Philharmonic, neither orchestra was contracted officially to make the recording.

²⁵⁶ John Briggs, “Records: Americans, Parker’s ‘Hora Novissima’ and Bacon Score Issued,” *New York Times*, 14 June 1953.

²⁵⁷ Alice Ditson was the widow of Oliver Ditson, a noted music publisher based in Boston. She established the Ditson Fund with a gift of \$400,000 to the Music Department at Columbia in 1940. As of 2013, the Fund has awarded over 2000 grants, the majority of which were for the composition, performance, and recording of new music. Website music.columbia.edu/ditson, accessed 05 July 2013.

Hora Novissima was purely a studio creation, designed to create a tangible artifact of the piece in the hope of reviving interest in it. Until the 1994 album was released, it would remain the only reference recording of the work.

Reference recording is an apt description. By normal studio standards, the Recording Society disc is somewhat sloppy, and the audio quality is uneven (even given the date). The sole purpose of the recording seems to be to remind the listening public of the work's existence; the overall air is one of competence, a word used several times by Briggs in the review.²⁵⁸ The critic means competent in a generally good sense, as he notes that *Hora Novissima* is "strikingly effective" when given a competent performance, which he considers this recording to be.²⁵⁹ The soloist quartet, drawn from the Vienna State Opera, were all deemed to have performed with "fine competence,"²⁶⁰ this seems to mean, based on listening to the recording, that all the pitches and rhythms are more or less where they should be and that diction is fairly clean and intelligible. It is to be wondered what the album would have sounded like if the piece had been rehearsed to the levels normally expected of the Vienna State Opera.

Aside from those brief comments of muted praise directed to the conductor, William Strickland, and the performers, the review is largely of the work itself rather than of the quality of performance heard on the recording. The contents of this review provide another interesting glimpse into the continuing evolution of criticism. The increasing chronological distance removes a great deal of the passion so present in earlier reviews and commentary. The hopeful tenor of the earliest critiques, the

²⁵⁸ Briggs, "Records," *New York Times*, 14 June 1953.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

adulation of Parker's colleagues and family, and the ideological lambasting provided by Edward Robinson in the early 1930s, yield to a critical voice that begins to settle into a more dispassionate tone, able to analyze with little personal investment in the work. While certainly more evenhanded in his presentation than the majority of the above writers, Briggs's distance and the constricting medium of the three-column newspaper record review render his writing less powerful, and given its position in a daily newspaper (even one as widely circulated as the *New York Times*), likely less impactful than a magazine or journal article.

Nevertheless, Briggs's brief critique of *Hora Novissima* does merit mention, as his opinion is emblematic of the beginnings of what would become as close to a consensus regarding the piece and its place in the repertoire as is likely to appear for the foreseeable future. The descriptions of both composer and piece, generally positive but not particularly excited, begin to morph into caricatures, ones that will be repeated virtually unchecked for generations.

The two subject headings in Briggs's review are "Old-Fashioned" and "Ingenuity."²⁶¹ These words reinforce some of the earliest opinions of *Hora Novissima*, especially the view of Parker as well-educated craftsman or skilled artisan rather than highly creative artist. The principal difference between the Briggs review and the earliest criticism is in the treatment of the piece's place in the repertoire: by the 1950s, it had none. Early critiques assumed a place for Parker's work based on its initial popularity; Briggs, writing more than sixty years after the premiere, sees *Hora Novissima* as "one of the most ambitious projects undertaken by an American

²⁶¹ Ibid.

composer.”²⁶² “It is also,” he continues, “all things considered, one of the most successful.”²⁶³ It is the “all things considered” that gives pause – the implication is that since nothing approaching greatness was occurring in American composition in Parker’s era, that this piece is as good as it got in a time when good wasn’t very. Hence the need for this recording, a sort of artistic salvage operation, designed to create, at very least, a museum exhibit: a snapshot of American music before it became completely American (that is, before the influences of African and Latin musics so completely merged with the extant European stream as to be inextricable).

Briggs appears to be the first critic to have raised the question of Parker’s comfortable residency within the confines of his own era as a possible cause of his fall from popularity. There is a strong possibility that Parker’s exceptional skillset marked him so firmly as a member of his generation that his music seemed dated more quickly than that of his more adventurous or even of his more reactionary contemporaries. It fit so perfectly in its world that it may have seemed a period piece before Parker’s life had even ended. Briggs speaks clearly on the subject:

Parker was in the mainstream of Anglo-American writers²⁶⁴ of church music. It is possible that he did not transcend the musical environment in which he found himself, turning its idiosyncrasies to his own account as Bach did those of the late polyphonic era, as Mozart utilized the extreme formalism of the rococo period, as Tchaikovsky molded the prevalent Russian nationalism of his time into classic patterns to become finally a Westerner among Russians and a Russian among Westerners. All these things demand an ego more unbridled than quiet, gentlemanly Horatio Parker, by all accounts, possessed. On the other hand, he had a deft touch and a practiced hand. He had become a church organist at 16, and followed that calling until his death. He had a professional’s experience, acquired at first hand, of what would go and what would not. Few unsingably awkward passages are to be found in “Hora Novissima.” What

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Here is another reference to a school of composers defined more by linguistic and cultural ties than regional or national ones.

Beethoven wrote from deep inner compulsion in the “Missa Solemnis” and the Ninth Symphony, Parker refrained from writing because of his choirmaster’s knowledge that no one would be able to perform it.²⁶⁵

It is this very professionalism which in the end makes Parker a little tiresome. The suavity of his writing is like that of Gounod in “The Redemption” or Paisiello in toto. A bolder note (not necessarily a more dissonant one) is needed to lend variety to the smooth flow of consonances.²⁶⁶

This last comment is particularly intriguing, as Parker’s variety of compositional styles, particularly with regard to his ability to overcome the difficulties presented by the scansion of Bernard’s poem, was singled out for praise by several earlier critics.

Continuing in the tradition of confused commentary that has characterized Parker criticism since *Hora Novissima*’s first performances, Briggs then goes on to praise Parker’s high degree of skill as a contrapuntist and, surprisingly given his complaints concerning the composer’s lack of inspiration, his great skill in “achieving variety in his setting of verses that proceed to the unvarying, relentless rhythm of ‘La donna e mobile’.”²⁶⁷ To sum up, Briggs finds worth in Parker’s writing: skill, some interest, and a particular skill in text accentuation, but he still finds the overall package to be lacking. Briggs has none of the excitement of either the depression-era populists, damning the Parkers of American history as representatives of a too-Eurocentric elite or the earliest critics predicting a permanent, canonical place for *Hora Novissima* as a solid representative of an American composer at least on par with many of his European contemporaries.

²⁶⁵ Interestingly, Briggs is echoing a common criticism of Mozart’s sacred music here – that the masses and other church music of the Salzburg master are less-than-inspired due to the rather conservative needs of sacred music and the lesser skill set of the choirs employed to sing it.

²⁶⁶ Briggs, “Records,” *New York Times*, 14 June 1953.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

Of particular interest is a brief sentence toward the end of the review, which notes that, as of 1953, there had been at least 178 performances of *Hora Novissima*. This number is based on the records of Parker's American publisher.²⁶⁸ This includes only concerts which required the rental of orchestral parts, so it can be assumed that numerous smaller oratorio societies, church choirs, and university ensembles performed the piece with piano or organ accompaniment. As of 2013, that number is likely approaching 200, if not surpassing it.

The end of the decade of the 1950s brought a somewhat high-profile performance of *Hora Novissima*, by the Washington (DC) and Cathedral Choral Societies and the National Symphony Orchestra under conductor Paul Callaway. The December 10, 1959 concert in the National Cathedral was well covered by the Washington Press, with three major daily newspapers publishing reviews of the event. Reviews of both piece and performance were generally positive: headlines for the articles state that the work was “thrillingly done”²⁶⁹ and a “triumph.”²⁷⁰

Milton Berliner, the critic for the *Washington Daily News*, treated the work as established repertoire, commenting (as many mid-20th century critics would) largely on the excellent quality of the musicians and Paul Callaway's skill in pacing the performance for maximum impact. His lone comment on the quality of the composition seems to find a lack of emotional or spiritual depth: “the music, tho it speaks of an evil world and judgment day and doom, and tho it is very appealing and skilfully written, stays serenely on the surface thruout.”²⁷¹

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Day Thorpe, “‘Hora Novissima’ Thrillingly Done,” *The Evening Star*, 11 December 1959.

²⁷⁰ Milton Berliner, “A Triumph for Callaway,” *Washington Daily News*, 11 December 1959.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

The appealing nature of the work is a common theme in the criticism of the 1950s; Paul Hume's review in the *Washington Post* is actually titled "Musical Forebear 'Hora Novissima' Appealing."²⁷² The immediately accessible nature of the piece is considered a weakness, as evidenced by the faint praise Hume uses to explain the performance: the soloists "did all that could be done in the music," the chorus was "at its best in that they are asked for little but beautiful tone and massed sounds," and the conductor "gave the work with the finest romantic impulse, heightening each telling climax and enlivening where possible the academicisms of the writing."²⁷³ Lukewarm at best, Hume's criticism again rings with the overarching concept that Parker was simply too good at being a composer of his era. The lack of progressive or forward-thinking devices in his writing reduces it to the level of academic at best, merely derivative at worst. The latter possibility is alluded to by Hume: "the scoring for orchestra is in the Brahms-Dvorak manner, as are many of the work's principal elements."²⁷⁴ Hume saves his final dismissal of *Hora Novissima* for the last words of his review, stating that "In such generously proportioned, and understanding an account as last night's, it is good to hear one of our major musical forebears."²⁷⁵ Had he stopped there, the notice could have been read as somewhat approving, if not effusive. He appends, however, the words "now and then,"²⁷⁶ relegating Parker's work to the museum dustbin with a deftly sardonic touch of phrase designed to equate the piece

²⁷² Paul Hume, "Musical Forebear 'Hora Novissima' Appealing," *The Washington Post*, 11 December 1959.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

with a necessary, if trying, bit of history that is most important in showing how far American music had progressed by 1959.

In a less passive-aggressive manner,²⁷⁷ Day Thorpe, writing for the Washington *Evening Star*, comes to some of the same conclusions as Paul Hume (and Milton Berliner). While this agreement may be more illustrative of the critical climate of Cold War America than of a completely impartial, thoroughly researched, view of *Hora Novissima*, Thorpe's writing yields more specific, less generic commentary on Parker's writing and is therefore useful in attempting to create a critical identity for the work. Thorpe, due to his more significant concentration on the composition (rather than the performance), is quoted at length below.

After some brief introductory material, Thorpe writes:

It is easy to point out the weaknesses of "Hora Novissima;" the ambitiousness of the work, its somewhat faded grandeur, its peculiar honest nobility, and the picture of a musical outlook now obsolete combine to make a performance of it an interesting endeavor.²⁷⁸

While it is unclear why Thorpe found honest nobility and ambitiousness to be negative characteristics, he is in good critical company in his description of Parker's stylistic obsolescence.

Thorpe does approve, and heartily, of Parker's choice of text, approving of its vivid imagery and the "swing" of its medieval Latin.²⁷⁹ After praising Parker's "astute" choice of libretto, Thorpe pays the work a significant compliment"

²⁷⁷ Although not completely absent snide asides – Thorpe begins his critique by noting that American composers of Parker's era form a "club as exclusive as that of minor Southern poets" before noting that Parker was truly exceptional, a "thorough musician." Day Thorpe, "'Hora Novissima,'" *Evening Star*, 11 December 1959.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

The composer, having chosen a broad and colorful canvas, was able to carry out his plan for an hour and a half without an eventual collapse in interest – the fate of many grandiose plans of the romantics. Furthermore, some movements of “*Hora Novissima*” – the a cappella chorus and the “Stant Syon Atria,” for example – have touches of unusually deep musical communication.²⁸⁰

This seems to be firm, if not glowing, praise. As with many of the critics encountered thus far, there is a confusing inability in Thorpe to allow praise to go unanswered by condemnation (or vice versa). Following the list of weaknesses and the praise of the poem and the piece’s communicativeness, he writes:

The great fault of the oratorio, one that becomes almost comic with the procession of the movements, is the lack of rhythmic vitality and the complete monotony of the shape of each phrase. Each bit of melody starts with a long note and usually ends with a dotted fillip. On the other hand, the orchestration is as lush as Tchaikovsky or Franck, the writing for chorus is capable, even brilliant, and the solo vocal writing is a proleptic imitation of the best of Puccini.²⁸¹

Thorpe seems markedly undecided in his appraisal, alternately impressed and derisive. Further into the review, he refers to the music as “expansive and luxurious,” before closing with a description of *Hora Novissima* as an “honest, craftsmanlike, unusual work, typical of the aspirations of our musical forefathers.”²⁸² Craftsmanlike and unusual seem to be, if not opposites, dissimilar enough to point to Thorpe’s lack of a critical consensus within himself. To refer to the vocal writing, which was just roundly mocked as almost comic, as presaging the masterful touch of Puccini should indicate an excellent composition, as should the use of adjectives like brilliant, sensitive, and honest. Thorpe reserves any real judgment, seeming content to be confused by the work’s apparent internal contradictions.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

Ten years after the American Recording Society's performance of *Hora Novissima* was released and reviewed, and four years after the Washington performance, the centennial of Horatio Parker's birth was celebrated, according to the Library of Congress, "across the country."²⁸³ While several cities did recognize the Parker anniversary, some with performances of portions of *Hora Novissima*, and the small amount of fanfare was more than is generally afforded to American art music composers of Parker's generation, only a small uptick in overall interest accompanied the celebration.²⁸⁴

Not surprisingly, a significant portion of that excitement was centered in and around New Haven, Connecticut, specifically at Yale University, where Parker served as the first dean of the school of music. Still, mentions of the Parker anniversary seem to outnumber actual performances, at least of his larger works. It is possible that the significant number of anthems, service settings, and hymns written for use in the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States (some of which are still to be found in that denomination's worship book) were performed with regularity during the 1963 observance, but the larger cantatas, even *Hora Novissima*, had by this time fallen out of favor.²⁸⁵

While Parker's entire life and output were being celebrated, *Hora Novissima* looms so large in his corpus that mentions of it surface often in media concerning the

²⁸³ Anonymous, "Centennial of Horatio Parker," *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, XXII/36, 09 September 1963.

²⁸⁴ An exception may be William Kearns, whose dissertation on Parker's life and music, which remains the only large-scale scholarly treatment of the composer and his output, was completed shortly after the Parker centennial. The extra interest in Parker's life caused by the celebration of his centennial may have brought the composer to Kearns's attention.

²⁸⁵ While beyond the scope of this study, it should be mentioned that very few references to *St. Christopher*, the other of Parker's larger, mature sacred works, can be found after its initial spate of performances. The same can be said of the majority of his output.

commemoration. Almost every mention of the centennial contains a reference to *Hora Novissima*. Interestingly, however, there does not seem to have been a significant rise in the number of performances of the work, at least not ones that left a significant footprint in the media. The significance of the piece as a historical document was underscored by the placement of its holograph on permanent display in the Library of Congress²⁸⁶ earlier in the decade, in September of 1961, as one of 250 examples deemed “Treasures of American Music.”²⁸⁷ Yale University also displayed Parker’s works on their campus, and the New York Times credited the university with encouraging the commemoration of Parker’s life through performances in a very brief column in June of 1963.²⁸⁸

The most well-documented performance of *Hora Novissima* in its entirety during the commemorative year took place in May of 1963 in Kansas City. That the concert was specifically planned in conjunction with the anniversary of Parker’s birth is made explicit in the headline of a brief article previewing the event: To Honor Centennial of Horatio Parker May 26.²⁸⁹ Yet another preview refers to the piece as a “classic,” an indication of prominence and of age.²⁹⁰ The concert was performed by the Mendelssohn Choir, the resident faculty quartet from Kansas City University, and the

²⁸⁶ The Library of Congress mentions the holograph as one of its “most cherished manuscripts by an American composer,” the typical caveat “American” likely indicating that other music manuscripts by European composers are of greater value. Anonymous, “Exhibits: Centennial of Horatio Parker,” *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, 22/36, 9 September 1963. . MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 33.

²⁸⁷ Anonymous, “Centennial Program to Honor First Yale Music School Dean,” *The New Haven Register*, 8 May 1963.

²⁸⁸ Anonymous, “Centennial,” *The New York Times*, 23 June 1963. MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 33.

²⁸⁹ Anonymous, “To Honor Centennial of Horatio Parker May 26,” *Kansas City Star*, 28 April 1963. . MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 33.

²⁹⁰ Anonymous, “Mendelssohn Choir Sings Classic Today,” *Kansas City Star*, 26 May 1963. . MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 33.

Allied Arts Orchestra, a professional ensemble. The performance was conducted by Francis Buebendorf, then a relative newcomer to the Kansas City music scene.

Journalists seemed content to defer to Buebendorf for commentary regarding *Hora Novissima*, and he obliged by listing his reasons for programming a somewhat obscure work:

This year is the centennial of Parker's birth, and American music owes him much. Also, this month marks the 70th anniversary of the first performance of the 'Hora Novissima.' It is generally conceded to be Parker's best composition.²⁹¹

Buebendorf goes on to mention his opinion that the Mendelssohn Choir should introduce the Kansas City community to lesser-known works, citing Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* as an example, a piece that is only seven years younger than *Hora Novissima*. While the comparison places Parker's work in good company, neither the author of the article nor the conductor of the performance makes much mention of the quality of Parker's composition, seeming content to introduce the work and allow the audience to decide.

²⁹¹ Sandor Kallai, "Mendelssohn Choir Turns to an American Musical Pioneer for Cantata to Be Sung Sunday," *Kansas City Star*, 25 April 1963. . MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 31, Folder 33.

The Work of William Kearns, 1965

The single most important contribution to Parker criticism in the 1960s (and thereafter) is William Kearns's doctoral dissertation *Horatio Parker 1863-1919: A Study of His Life and Music*. At 728 pages, it remains the most in-depth treatment of Parker to date, and his discussion of *Hora Novissima* is the starting place for any scholar wishing to study the work. The chapter of this document that deals with the overall architecture of the piece relies on Kearns's dissertation as a point of departure; only his comments that deal specifically with criticism or critical reception will be mentioned here.

Like several previous commentators, Kearns finds great worth in Parker's contrapuntal writing, in particular as it manifests itself in the choruses. He states unequivocally that "the choral writing is the most impressive feature of the entire oratorio."²⁹² He also mentions the difficulty of setting so regular a text, opining that Parker overcomes the somewhat square, two-measure units that predominate by careful writing within the arias, particularly in the subtly changing metric structure of the bass aria "Spe modo vivitur."²⁹³

Kearns traces the overall critical history of the work and finds therein an arc similar to the one described above in this document. He cites, in particular, the year 1897 as the height of *Hora Novissima*'s popularity, noting that in that year "reviews treated the oratorio not with the curiosity which accompanies the examination of a novelty, but rather the accolades accorded a well-established work."²⁹⁴ Kearns cites

²⁹² William K. Kearns, *Horatio Parker 1863-1919: A Study of His Life and Music*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois, 1965), 380.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 386.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 389.

sources which, to him, indicate that *Hora Novissima* was the most performed oratorio in America at that time.²⁹⁵ Kearns sees the First World War as the definitive moment of change in critical opinion regarding Parker's work; most scholars and music critics would likely agree. Kearns includes quotations from Boston critics reviewing two Handel and Haydn Society concerts of the work, one in 1918 and one in 1921 (that is, during and after the war) that illustrate neatly the change, at first subtle and then glaring, in reception of *Hora Novissima*. After the performance in April of 1918, the critic for the *Boston Evening Transcript* wrote:

Under the test of years, the finer, the inner qualities of "Hora Novissima" endure and retain all their freshness. At the same time the episodes obviously constructed to "fill in," the casual musical ideas incompatible with the theme and the text, the Wagnerian influence²⁹⁶ which a quarter of a century ago were to be expected in orchestra writing, are rapidly aging.²⁹⁷

Olin Downes, the well-known critic for the *Boston Post*, seemed to concur that *Hora Novissima*'s star was fading, stating forthrightly that:

The harmony is the harmony of fifty years ago; there are passages that now sound old fashioned. However, *Hora Novissima* is a work which retains the admiration of the public because of its melodic beauty, the skill of the choral writing and the evident inspiration with which the music was composed.²⁹⁸

Downes's review again illustrates the confused criticism that surrounds *Hora Novissima*, mentioning inspiration as a source of the works enduring (as of 1918) appeal.

By 1921, the First World War was well past and musical tastes were rapidly and radically changing. The Handel and Haydn Society chose to program *Hora Novissima*

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ It should be remembered here that several previous critics had praised Parker for eschewing Wagnerian influence.

²⁹⁷ Anonymous, Untitled Review, *Boston Evening Transcript*, 18 February 1918.

²⁹⁸ Olin Downes, Untitled Review, *Boston Post*, 18 February 1918.

again for their 1921 season, and Kearns included in his dissertation a Boston review that shows quite clearly this shift in attitude a mere three years after the two above

quotations:

Mr. Parker's oratorio is uneven, and only occasionally rises above a style which, while adequate and always beautiful, is never quite of the first order. It is the style in which a thousand anthems have been conceived; it is guaranteed to wear well, to stir, but not to strain, the emotions. It misses the holiness of church music and it falls short of the unsentimentalized fervors of the best music drama.²⁹⁹

It is quite possible, as he worked for the *Post* until 1924, that Olin Downes wrote the uncredited 1921 critique in addition to the gentler 1918 one. Either way, the three preceding quotations were wisely chosen by William Kearns to show with crystalline clarity this moment of cultural shift in America's musical history. It is to be wondered, again, whether the quality of Parker's composition has much to do with this change in critical outlook at all. Most of the works of his generation join his in relative obscurity, victims of the attitudinal shift that followed the Great War.

Kearns makes brief mention of his own contemporaries, noting that most critics in the 1960s seemed to discount the work as too academic, too unoriginal, and too eclectic in style. He concludes that *Hora Novissima* was better suited to the pre-war era and that it seemed to provide a "certain intangible quality to which the following generations were no longer sensitive."³⁰⁰ Kearns gives the final word to the original group of critics, however, rather than those of his own time. He concludes his section on *Hora Novissima* by noting that no consensus has been formed:

The question remains as to whether the oratorio shows "a disconcerting hodgepodge of influences"³⁰¹ or whether it was derived in a genuine eclectic

²⁹⁹ Olin Downes, Untitled Review, *Boston Post*, 28 May 1921.

³⁰⁰ Kearns, *Horatio Parker*, Ph.D. diss., 393.

³⁰¹ A quote from Gilbert Chase, cited earlier.

spirit – that of drawing on the past and creating a fusion of historical traditions which satisfy an esthetic demand of the time. The influential critics of Parker’s day clearly asserted the latter.³⁰²

Kearns’s final opinion was that Parker’s success was based on his “ability to achieve a balance of pleasing melody, sensuous chord structure, colorful orchestration, and stirring polyphonic effects,”³⁰³ and that that success was, in large part, deserved. He finds in *Hora Novissima*’s diversity of styles some emblematic of the American musical experience, stating that “the Anglican hymn tune and the pervading chromatic style [of Parker’s era] is no less a part of America’s highly diversified musical heritage than the Civil War song or the camp meeting tune.”³⁰⁴

³⁰² Kearns, *Horatio Parker*, Ph.D. diss., 393.

³⁰³ Ibid., 687.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

The 1970s

As the decade of the 1970s dawned and the celebration of the nation's bicentennial approached, musicologists in the United States began to turn their attention to America's musical past. This era saw significant amount of interest in composers considered the most overtly American in nature. The general consensus seemed to have been that American-ism showed itself in a composer's individuality; composers as different as William Billings and Charles Ives fit that definition well, and significant amounts of study and ink were given them. While much of the foray into discovering a truly American style (a turn of phrase that occurs with such frequency in the literature that a source citation is impossible) centered on iconoclasts, revolutionaries, and the burgeoning influence of popular styles, the Music Library Association was quietly working to reintroduce what it termed "Musical Americana"³⁰⁵ to the American musical scene. The use of the term "Americana" is telling – the association, as befits a group of librarians, was interested in preserving and making available anything that could contribute to a greater knowledge of America's musical past; *Hora Novissima* certainly fits that description. The Music Library Association, through Da Capo Press, re-issued the original Novello score of the piece in 1972, as part of its *Earlier American Music* series.

Being labeled "Americana" implies a relegation to museum status for the work. An organization need not work to preserve something that has an active performance life; preservation is reserved for something in danger of being lost. It can be assumed that Parker's works, indeed those of almost all 19th-century American art music

³⁰⁵ H. Wiley Hitchcock, Editor's Foreward to Horatio Parker, *Hora Novissima* [Reprint], New York, Da Capo Press, 1972.

composers, could have been considered as inhabitants of a musical endangered species list. The Music Library Association's (and other similar initiatives, notable the Library of Congress's current endeavors in conjunction with the American Choral Directors Association) score publications and recording projects stayed their extinction and presented them to a musical establishment that, by 1972, was at such a great remove from Parker's generation that they were virtually unaware of any of America's earliest schools of composers.

They did so, however, from a sense of curatorial obligation, rather than from any defined sense of artistic merit, and therefore re-released the score to *Hora Novissima* with little commentary or criticism attached, preferring, it would seem, to serve a library function absent judgment of the work's quality. In that vein, the introduction to the reissue of the full score, written by series editor H. Wiley Hitchcock, fills less than a page and deals principally with the growth of the oratorio society in America, Parker's background, and a description of Bernard's poem.³⁰⁶ There are, however, a few brief sentences that indicate the editor's opinion of *Hora Novissima*.

Hitchcock falls squarely into the second category of criticism described in the introduction to this chapter. He finds no fault with Parker's training nor with his skill as a musical artisan, instead mentioning Parker's tendency toward eclecticism in a generally positive and noting that Parker's German training lends the work "hymnic grandeur, solidity, and dignity."³⁰⁷ Absent from Hitchcock's assessment is any mention of inspiration, excellence, or any type of superlative: he finds *Hora Novissima* to be

³⁰⁶ Critic Harold Schonberg, writing for the *New York Times*, complained about the brevity of the introductory matter to all of the reprints in the *Earlier American Music* series in his March 11, 1973 review of the series. See further mentions below.

³⁰⁷ Hitchcock, Editor's Introduction, *Hora Novissima*,

solid, representative of Parker's school and training, perhaps even emblematic of its era, but not a piece that approaches greatness.

Like several previous commentators, Hitchcock points to Parker's skill as a contrapuntist and the quality of his choral writing as strengths of the piece. He finds in the work a lack of communication, stating (as quoted above, in the introduction to this chapter) that *Hora Novissima* is "more impressive than entertaining," and noting that the piece is a "monument to the ideals of Parker and his fellow-composers."³⁰⁸

Hitchcock also brings back the idea of Parker as a German-American composer, based largely on his training by Rheinberger and his exposure, while in Germany, to the works of other German composers. At the same time, he notes an influence of Rossini and Verdi, of English singing societies and their American descendants, and of Dvořák – an eclecticism that in a later composer might be called a hallmark of American style.

Harold Schonberg, critic for the *New York Times*, wrote a review of the *Earlier American Music* in 1973, shortly after its initial publications, including *Hora Novissima*, were released. Although his review centered largely on his delight in discovering the quirky charms of the music of Anthony Philip Heinrich, he makes brief mention of *Hora Novissima* as a "once-famous work," representing "a field pretty much overlooked by musicologists, and completely overlooked by performing groups and solo musicians."³⁰⁹ Echoing the museum approach that seems to define mid-and-late-20th-century criticism, Schonberg suggests that much of the material in the series could be played at special concerts of American music. His view of Parker's work is summed up in the final mention of *Hora Novissima* in his column: "'Hora Novissima,' for

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Harold Schonberg, "Inhibited? Not Father Heinrich," *New York Times*, 11 March 1973.

instance, may be derivative post-romanticism, but it is a sturdily built work and is part of our heritage.”³¹⁰ In essence, its place in history should assure it an occasional performance, but its reliance on workmanship and its kinship to its contemporaries remove it from the first tier.

The journal *Music & Letters* also published a review of the reprinted edition of *Hora Novissima*, coming to many of the same conclusions as Hitchcock did in the edition’s introductory matter, although the critic for *Music & Letters* puzzled over Hitchcock’s mention of the work being unentertaining.³¹¹ The author of the review, credited by the initials J.A.W., again mentions that the piece is characterized more by “solid workmanship than by any genuine glow of inspiration,”³¹² while also acknowledging the significance of Parker’s achievement given his young age at the time *Hora Novissima* was composed. He finds a lack of rhythmic interest, due largely to the composer being “shackled by the rhythms of the text,”³¹³ and sees a lack of unification in style in the composition, where some other critics have seen an eclecticism designed to maintain listener interest. The a cappella chorus “Urbs Syon unice,” often cited as evidence of Parker’s skill in counterpoint, is compared by the reviewer to a student exercise, “and not a very good one.”³¹⁴ Criticism of Parker, which was admittedly not a very significant proportion of musicological writing in the 1970s, was generally colored by an additional stream of influence outside the typical passing down of untested opinions that often characterizes generalist writing on more obscure composers: that of

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ J.A.W., review of Paine, John Knowles, Symphony No. 1, *C minor*, Op. 23, Score and Parker, Horatio W., *Hora Novissima*, Op. 30, for soli, chorus and orchestra, score. ‘Earlier American Music,’ ed. By H. Wiley Hitchcock, Nos. 1 and 2, *Music & Letters* 54/2 (April, 1973), 243-244.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

Charles Ives and those scholars who were making a study of his compositions and writings.

In 1974, Victor Fell Yellin³¹⁵ wrote an extended review of a new recording of Charles Ives's *The Celestial Country* in the *Musical Quarterly*. While an extended discussion of the Ives/Parker relationship is well beyond the scope of this paper, Yellin's thoughts on that relationship, and the likelihood that it was more typical of student/professor relationships than the iconoclastic Ives cared to acknowledge in later life, may provide some insight as to the general academic opinion of Parker's music as stuffy, too European, too rule-bound – in essence, too un-Ives. Yellin points out that Ives chose to set text from the same lengthy poem by Bernard that provided Parker's libretto for *Hora Novissima*, and that there are moments of remarkable similarity in melodic content, form, and use of rhythm between the two works.³¹⁶ In fact, Yellin states that Ives's piece was “an essay in conformity to late-nineteenth-century taste in Protestant church music in unabashed imitation of his teacher.”³¹⁷

While not a part of the body of critical work building up around *Hora Novissima*, Yellin's comments regarding Ives scholarship marking Parker as a mediocrity bent on stifling Ives's genius are quite germane to the problem of disinterestedly analyzing the quality of Parker's work. The teacher now resides in the shadow of the student, and much of the writing on Parker is done through the lens of

³¹⁵ Yellin is among the preeminent scholars on the life and works of Parker's teacher and friend, George Whitefield Chadwick. He has worked to prove American-isms in Chadwick's music using analytical tools, and may not be completely unbiased in his attempt to rehabilitate Parker's reputation as a teacher.

³¹⁶ Victor Fell Yellin, Untitled Review, *The Musical Quarterly* 60/3, July, 1974, 500-508.

³¹⁷ Ibid. 506.

Ives. Perhaps a greater chronological distance will enable Parker's works to be assessed fairly, absent the now-traditional mention of Ives as his suffering student.³¹⁸

The Music Library Association, interestingly given its sponsorship of the *Earlier American Music* project, did not publish a review of the early editions in the series until the June, 1975 issue of its publication *Notes*. Parker's work is mentioned very briefly and in the context of the entire series, but reviewer Richard Swift's commentary on the Second New England School in general exhibit an awareness of that group of composers as unexamined by most scholars:

It has been conventional of recent years to scarify the work, largely unknown today, of these composers as derivative, conservative, unoriginal, academic, and worst of all, "genteel." Yet the music of "The Boston Classicists," that frigid appellation of some historians, is hardly a case of "fatto in casa," rather, it was the result of competent musical thinking, not less to be admired for its solid virtues than flayed for the ones it does not possess.³¹⁹

Competent thinking, solid virtues – it would seem even Parker's defenders cannot escape these terms. Later in the article, Swift states that the music strives for "high-minded solemnity,"³²⁰ echoing several commentators, most recently Hitchcock in the preface to the very edition Swift is reviewing. The reviewer, like Yellin above, also points to Ives's "single student evaluation" as a reason for a lack of serious scholarship on Parker's career or compositions. He concludes the section of his review that concerns *Hora Novissima* with something approaching praise:

Everything is immaculately put together and intelligently scored for voices and orchestra in this hour-long meditation, a composition superior to most of those written for various choral societies of the period.³²¹

³¹⁸ It is left to conjecture to wonder what Parker's present-day reputation might be had Ives spoken of him with the glowing admiration he reserved for the father.

³¹⁹ Richard Swift, Untitled Review, *Notes, Second Series* 31/4, June 1975, 850-852.

³²⁰ Ibid. 852.

³²¹ Ibid.

While the writer's opinion of Victorian oratorio is unclear, his placement of *Hora Novissima* as one of that era's stronger works at least restores some of the piece's historical identity. Swift's judgment seems based on the music itself, not Parker's place in a historic school or his relationship to Ives.

Performances of the *Hora Novissima* did continue in the 1970s, and one in Pasadena, California merited a review in the Los Angeles Times. The Pasadena chapter of the American Guild of Organists sponsored a service consisting of Parker's *Jam sol recedit*,³²² one of his settings of the Magnificat, some of his organ music and hymns, and *Hora Novissima*. As in the commentary by Yellin and Swift, a subtle change in Parker's status can be seen in the reviewer's choice of words. For example, the introductory paragraph refers to *Hora Novissima* as an "acknowledged masterpiece,"³²³ an effusive description more akin to the earliest American criticism than the acerbic writings of the 1950s and 1960s.

The anonymous author of the review admits that Parker is little known "outside the pages of music history alluding to a school of 19th-century Americans of European training and allegiance"³²⁴ and that his music is rarely performed. In a fashion reminiscent of some earlier criticism, a rather messy string of descriptors positive and negative are attached to the work:

"Hora Novissima" proved, rather expectedly, to be an artfully constructed, occasionally exalted, sometimes touching, sprawling conglomeration of Brahms, Liszt, Wagner, Bruckner,³²⁵ et al. The text, fortunately sung on Sunday in incomprehensible Latin, effuses yearningly for the next world. Parker's

³²² The lovely a cappella chorus from *The Legend of St. Christopher*.

³²³ Anonymous, "Parker's 'Hora' Performed in Church, *Los Angeles Times*, 17 Feb 1976.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ These may be the first mentions of Liszt and Bruckner as influences.

compounded homage can be understood if not wholly accepted: how could any minor creative talent of his day help being intimidated by so many giants?³²⁶

If any pattern is developing in criticism of Parker and *Hora Novissima* by this point in history, it is of a somewhat comic inconsistency, often within a single article or review, in the status of the work: an “acknowledged masterpiece” created by a “minor creative talent.” In the absence of a long, detailed scholarly tradition, critics seemed at a loss as to how Parker and his compositions, especially *Hora Novissima*, should be categorized. The critic for the *Times* chooses the middle road: a masterpiece with no master. The reviewer also touches upon the piece’s importance as historical document, using praise akin to Swift’s suggestion that *Hora Novissima* was better than the bad things written during its time period. The *Times* reviewer states that it deserved more performances during the bicentennial celebrations because so much truly poor music (probably occasional pieces written to commemorate the event) was being performed “in the name of bicentennial retrospection.”³²⁷

³²⁶ Anonymous, “Parker’s ‘Hora’ Performed in Church, Los Angeles Times.

³²⁷ Ibid.

The 1980s and 1990s

As the fanfare surrounding the 1976 celebration of the American bicentennial subsided, so, too, did some of the impetus to study music of Parker and his contemporaries. This is understandable, as 20th century American music was providing an enormous array of works, composers, new styles, and sociological implications that demanded attention from the musicological community. Two streams of interest that concern Horatio Parker's music persisted through the 1960s and 1970s into the 1980s: the growing interest, led, in part, by a resurgence of interest in the works of Amy Beach and discussion of her membership in the group, in the Second New England School as a historical phenomenon and a continued study of Parker in relation to his most famous pupil, Charles Ives. The first of these streams tended to focus on the concept of American style, hence the school designation being so firmly reinforced. The second generally concerned itself with Parker as a sort of negative image of Ives, the old, Eurocentric professor standing in relief against the firebrand insurance salesman. While much of this scholarly activity deals only tangentially with *Hora Novissima*, the fact that Parker's music is beginning to feature more often in musicological research marks another change in his status.

Alan Howard Levy, writing in *American Music*, points an accusatory finger at American musicology, writing that "for no logical reason, developments in American art music seem irrelevant compared to American vernacular traditions or but a pale version of European traditions."³²⁸ His basic complaint, then, is that Parker's generation (neatly encompassed, in large part, by the years Levy chooses to include in

³²⁸ Alan Howard Levy, "The Search for Identity in American Music, 1890-1920," *American Music* 2/2, Summer, 1984, 71.

his study, 1890-1920) was overshadowed by the development of jazz and other popular styles deemed more indigenously American. It is possible, perhaps even likely by Levy's thesis, that significant study of *Hora Novissima* was hampered by Parker's refusal to incorporate any hints of vernacular style in his compositions. Chadwick, by way of contrast, includes occasional nods to popular musical culture in many of his works. Perhaps this is among the reasons his music is more often studied and performed than Parker's. In Levy's writing, there are several mentions of Parker's technical mastery, usually with the proviso that his fastidious insistence on what Levy terms "anationalism" was a form of musical snobbery that likely contributed to the view of his works, particularly those as overtly "anational" as *Hora Novissima*, as essentially in the European tradition, or at least as representatives of an America rendered virtually unrecognizable by the passage of time.³²⁹

In his 1985 article on quotation in the works of Ives, J. Peter Burkholder seems to share Victor Fell Yellin's earlier assessment of Ives's *The Celestial Country* as an homage to his teacher's most famous work. While not specifically touching on *Hora Novissima*, Burkholder's acknowledgment of Ives's none-too-subtle borrowing from Parker in "scope, musical language, performing forces, text, and formal procedures"³³⁰ shows *Hora Novissima* as a piece with spiritual descendants, not a piece that exists outside the development of American styles. If Ives, perhaps the iconic American composer of the 20th century, looked to *Hora Novissima* as a wellspring of ideas, perhaps a more thorough reassessment of its importance is overdue.

³²⁹ Ibid. 78-79.

³³⁰ J. Peter Burkholder, "'Quotation' and Emulation: Charles Ives's Use of His Models," *The Musical Quarterly* 71/1, 1985, 15.

William Kearns, author of the seminal dissertation on Horatio Parker's life and works discussed above in the section of this chapter that deals with the 1960s, continued to study the composer during his long career on the faculty of the University of Colorado. He published a paper on Parker's connections to the English Choral Societies in 1986 and in 1990 also wrote a biography of Parker for the *Composers of North America* series. These two publications are continuations and expansions of Kearns's previous scholarship. *Hora Novissima* features prominently in each.

Kearns's article in *American Music* makes use of many of the earliest sources cited above in this chapter; primary material drawn from the British press charged with reviewing both works and performances. Of particular note are Kearns's thoughts with regard to *Hora Novissima*'s failure to attain a position in the standard repertory, suggesting that Parker's career choices may have had the greatest impact on his initial fall from popularity, which Kearns dates to 1905 in England.³³¹ It was surely later in the United States. In essence, Parker wrote only one more oratorio following the Birmingham performance in 1905, an occasional piece for the centennial of the Handel and Haydn Society titled *Morven and the Grail*. Parker instead turned to the composition of operas, writing two that met with some critical success and a great deal of commercial indifference, and to smaller choral works such as *King Gorm the Grim* and *A Song of Times*. Kearns also points to the growth in Yale's music program and Parker's formal appointment as its dean in 1904. Parker's growing list of positions in New York and Philadelphia, along with the lengthy commutes to and from them, contributed to a shift in his compositional career. Lacking the "first American" novelty

³³¹ William K. Kearns, "Horatio Parker and the English Choral Societies, 1899-1902," *American Music* 4/1, Spring, 1986, 29.

that accompanied his earlier works, perhaps it was difficult to maintain a presence in England while also attending to his duties in America. *Hora Novissima* might, possibly, have stayed in the performance repertoire had its composer been more forthcoming with additions to that repertoire. The First World War, followed rapidly by Parker's death, rendered that possibility moot.

The index to Kearns's 1990 biography of Parker contains no fewer than 31 individual references to *Hora Novissima*, making the piece by far the most discussed topic in the book.³³² Kearns measures the piece's importance within Parker's oeuvre in several ways familiar from his previous work; one of the most interesting is by noting that only *Mona*, Parker's prize-winning opera of 1915, features more prominently in the composer's diaries.³³³ In the same section of his book, Kearns notes that much of the earliest criticism of *Hora Novissima* treated the work's premiere as an event of great historical significance, broadening the importance of the piece into the realm of possible greatness.³³⁴

The 13-page section of Kearns's book that deals specifically with *Hora Novissima* and provides criticism and analysis of the work provides some new insights beyond those included in his earlier dissertation. Some of what Kearns points out has been alluded to elsewhere, but his distillation is compelling. He traces the streams of influence in Parker's career that led to his particular style of composition at the time of *Hora Novissima*'s creation, namely technique acquired in Germany, his earlier forays

³³² William K. Kearns, *Horatio Parker, 1863-1919: His Life, Music, and Ideas* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1990), 346.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 18.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

into both cantata and art song composition, and his extensive training as an organist.³³⁵

Kearns also points to the proliferation of adequately skilled oratorio societies in the eastern United States during the late 19th century and the fact that the best of these ensembles often favored new works alongside their traditional repertoire.³³⁶ Perhaps most important of all in providing the final impetus for the work's composition were Parker's trips to England in 1890 and 1892, trips specifically designed to expose the young composer to the great English choral festivals.³³⁷ A unique suggestion of Kearns is that some of Parker's earlier piano miniatures, in particular the "Fantaisie" from Parker's Op. 20 set, could be considered as stylistic and procedural precursors to *Hora Novissima*:

The broad chordal opening serves as a repository from which ideas are drawn to be used during the course of the piece; themes which are initially presented in separate sections are later combined;³³⁸ the contrapuntal writing shifts constantly from free to imitative; chromatically-based harmonies are present alongside diatonic, and, finally, some thematic evolution is present.³³⁹

The bulk of Kearns's chapter on *Hora Novissima* deals with musical analysis; that material proved extremely helpful in the chapter of this document that deals with the architecture of the piece. Kearns closes his chapter on *Hora Novissima* with a suggestion that changing attitudes toward eclecticism in music "should re-establish it as a monument both in the history of the oratorio and in American music."³⁴⁰ Kearns seems to think that the work should survive on its merits, rather than simply because of its age or provenance.

³³⁵ Ibid., 105.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid. 106.

³³⁸ A technique reminiscent of Mendelssohn's choral writing.

³³⁹ Kearns, Parker: Life, Music, and Ideas, 217.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 118.

One of the most intriguing ideas presented by Kearns is that Parker's reputation is incorrectly assessed due to a too-close identification of his style with that of *Hora Novissima*. Kearns posits that many of the accusations of backward-looking compositional style came about due to a failure to examine a greater section of Parker's output.³⁴¹ The success of his great oratorio locked his image, and this locking prevents a more standard assessment of the composer. Even during his lifetime, Parker's more adventurous forays (*Mona*, for example) into different harmonic use and more up-to-date style were almost always compared, usually negatively, with *Hora Novissima*.

Kearns, as the acknowledged expert in the music of Parker, was approached to write liner notes for a new commercial recording of *Hora Novissima* on the Albany label in 1994. His comments for the 1994 provide some further insight into his views on Parker in general and on *Hora Novissima* specifically. He provides yet another intriguing thought concerning Parker: "had the vortex of cultivated music in twentieth-century America remained with its church choirs and oratorio societies rather than shifting to its community and symphony orchestras, Parker might be better known today."³⁴² The presence of a commercially available recording of the work, the first issued by a record label since the 1953 Vienna recording, did much to reintroduce the piece to the listening public and, perhaps, rekindled some interest in further study and performance of it.³⁴³

³⁴¹ Ibid., 239.

³⁴² William K. Kearns, notes to *Horatio Parker – Hora Novissima* (1994), CD, Albany Records – Troy 124-25.

³⁴³ Recordings of several other Parker works have been made and are still in print. These pieces include his piano miniatures, the cantata *Cahal Mor of the Wine-red Hand*, and *A Northern Ballad*.

By the time Gayle Sherwood wrote her 1999 piece on Ives's Protestant choral influences, she was able to indicate that that composer's image was well on the way toward a more realistic one, absent the defensive posture of early writers insistent on Ives's complete uniqueness and lack of training or formal influence.³⁴⁴ Ives, in fact, drew heavily on European models for much of his career, and, of course, his teacher Horatio Parker exerted an influence quite obvious in the younger composer's early works. The influence of *Hora Novissima*, as mentioned above, is overt enough to seem more homage than borrowing. Sherwood's article, while largely concerned with Ives, makes several mentions of Parker in a manner that seems designed to further rehabilitate his image, referring to scholarly obsession with denigrating Parker to vindicate Ives as embellishing, paraphrasing, and distorting Ives's representation of Parker.³⁴⁵ *The Celestial Country* proves itself to be important to scholarship surrounding *Hora Novissima*, if only in its proof that Ives's mythology does not tell the complete story, either of the composer or of his relationship to Parker.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁴ Gayle Sherwood, "'Buds the Infant Mind:' Charles Ives's 'The Celestial Country' and Protestant American Choral Traditions," *19th-Century Music* 23/2, Autumn, 1999, 163.

³⁴⁵ Ibid. 166.

³⁴⁶ This topic is further explored in Bryan Simms's article "The German Apprenticeship of Charles Ives," which can be found in *American Music* 29/2, Summer 2011.

The New Millennium and Concluding Thoughts

Scholarly activity surrounding Horatio Parker and his works is becoming more common, with a doctoral document on some of his cantatas being defended as recently as 2012. That said, many of the resources available for those who wish to study American music of the 19th and early 20th centuries rely on repetitions of the same unexamined truisms regarding that generation as the late-20th-century advocates of Ives-as-hero. In essence, scholarship moves ahead, but books geared to non-specialist audiences and general education collegiate-level coursework seem to maintain an earlier critical point of view.

Parker fares well in a major popular history of America music published in the first decade of the 21st century, Joseph Horowitz's *Classical Music in America: A History*, originally published in 2005 with the unfortunate subtitle "A History of Its Rise and Fall;" the rise and fall portion was removed in the 2007 paperback printing. Horowitz sees in Ives's melding of memories from his childhood in Connecticut with influences from European art music as evidence of Parker's influence, an indication that the mainstream of cultural history in America might be prepared to follow the lead of specialized musicology in reassessing "Ives the haranguer," as Horowitz calls him.³⁴⁷ This reassessment should allow a more comfortable view of Parker in his own right, released from his domination by Ives.

Horowitz uses the ubiquitous quote from Ives concerning Parker's willingness to be constrained by what Rheinberger had taught him;³⁴⁸ however the multiple streams of

³⁴⁷ Joseph Horowitz, *Classical Music in America: A History* [2007], 1st Paperback Edition (New York: W.W Norton and Company, Inc., 2005), 237.

³⁴⁸ Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, 99.

influence mentioned by Kearns and a cursory study of *Hora Novissima* will cast doubt on that oft repeated grumbling of Ives's. Horowitz allows himself a brief challenge to the earlier orthodoxy regarding Parker in his discussion of *Hora Novissima*, however:

His signature work, the oratorio *Hora Novissima*, was performed frequently in the years following its premiere in 1893. Setting a twelfth-century Latin text evoking heavenly pleasures, Parker conveys a religious fervor freshly experienced. By turns fragrant and gentle, sonorous and grand, ennobled by the broad stride of its harmony and structure, enlivened by good tunes and unexpected touches of orchestral color, *Hora Novissima* is no Victorian corpse; a potent present-day performance would startle even non-believers. But Parker remains a stretch for twenty-first-century tastes.³⁴⁹

In Horowitz's assessment is a glimpse of a possible future for *Hora Novissima* as a work judged on its merits as a piece of musical art, rather than a sociological statement on Victorian America or an anti-Ives exercise in conservatism.

It would seem that because a generally agreed-upon critical canon has not built up around *Hora Novissima* as it has around more widely-performed works, a firm grasp on its place, both historically and artistically, is difficult to achieve. It is obvious, however, that the piece keeps resurfacing and, while not a part of the standard repertoire, *Hora Novissima* is a work that has never been completely out of circulation.³⁵⁰ Only now, 120 years after its premiere, is a fair assessment of its quality and impact even possible. The intervening cataclysms of the 20th century rendered dispassionate judgment impossible – seismic shifts in musical academia, in the place of popular styles within the context of art music, in America's relationship to Germany, in the American attitude toward the perceived elitism of the classical music establishment, and in the most basic view of what is meant by the words American music have all

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 100.

³⁵⁰ Since the work's 1893 premiere, very few years have gone by without at least one performance.

contributed, over the past century, to rendering difficult any critical analysis of the works of Parker and his contemporaries. The politicization of musicology contributed mightily to the mid-20th-century view of *Hora Novissima* as emblematic of European hegemony; that worldview would find further expression in the glorification of Charles Ives at the expense of his musically more conservative forebears, especially Parker. Recent scholarship has moved beyond the forced dichotomies of 20th century scholarship into a style of criticism that includes the socio-political information gathered in the 20th century but also works to judge works within both the context of their own eras and as musical artifacts that can be critiqued absent accumulated baggage. In essence, musicologists seem to be moving toward models of criticism that take into account the multiplicity of –isms used in the study of music in the 20th, rather than focusing solely on one type of criticism. This approach should mean good things for the future of *Hora Novissima*. Conductors, choirs, and audiences are often surprised, upon exposure to the work that they have never heard of work or composer;³⁵¹ perhaps the fresh look being taken by musical academia will yield a greater interest in the piece.

Hora Novissima's critical history is rather tortuous, but the three basic streams of critical thought mentioned at the head of this chapter come to the fore often enough to constitute a very rough pattern of critical thought: early critics named *Hora Novissima* a masterpiece, and while few later writers seem in complete agreement with that assessment, the word does resurface. By far the most common stream of thought is that

³⁵¹ Dr. Howard Skinner, Professor Emeritus on the faculty of the University of Northern Colorado, when introduced to the work, was surprised enough by the quality of the piece to immediately schedule a performance of it. In a career spanning some 50 years, Parker's oratorio had never been more than a name. Howard M. Skinner, personal interview (Greeley, CO: 2005).

of Parker as an excellent artisan with a penchant for borrowing. The third stream occurs less frequently – Parker as immature craftsman aping, not borrowing, from his betters. The final of these three has passed, by and large, out of favor, and most critics from the middle of the 20th century on seem in agreement as to Parker’s high degree of skill and the fact that he used allusions to other composers’ works consciously and purposefully.³⁵² While there is no real way of knowing which direction future scholarship will take, it seems that Parker’s admittedly dim star is in the ascent. Perhaps future critics will find greater merit in the deft compositional skill displayed in *Hora Novissima*’s counterpoint, melodic design, and architecture and once again elevate the piece to an artistic plane that will demand further performances and more in-depth study.

³⁵² A brief perusal of Parker’s excellent character pieces for piano, as recorded by Peter Kairoff in 1998 on the Albany label, will bear this out. Many of these miniatures seem specifically designed as an homage to a particular composer.

Chapter VI

AN ANALYSIS OF *HORA NOVISSIMA*

Overview

Hora Novissima is an eleven-movement cantata, in two parts, for chorus, solo quartet, and orchestra. The work's scoring is fairly standard for a large-scale late Romantic era piece: flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons in pairs; four horns, two trumpets,³⁵³ three trombones, and tuba; timpani, harps, and strings. The score also calls for organ in several movements, adding churchlike dignity and solemnity to the first and last movements in particular. Parker makes ample use of the members of the solo quartet: there is one aria each for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass, and the quartet sings as a whole in three of the eleven movements. The choral writing is predominantly for SATB with rare instances of brief divisi, with the exception of the eighth movement, which is written for SATB/SATB double chorus.³⁵⁴ The chorus sings in six of the work's movements, in keeping with similarly-proportioned works such as the Dvořák *Stabat Mater*, a work in ten movements with which Parker undoubtedly was familiar.³⁵⁵

As with Dvořák's piece, the overall architecture of *Hora Novissima* is well balanced, with massive choruses (movements I, IV, VI, VIII, and XI) serving as pillars holding up the beginning, middle, and ending of the work. The choral movements, with the exception of the a cappella "Urbs Syon unica," movement X, are positioned symmetrically, allowing the arias to function quite well in relief. "Urbs Syon unica,"

³⁵³ The score calls for trumpets in D, E flat, E, A, and B flat in various movements.

³⁵⁴ This movement is, by and large, a true double chorus, with each SATB grouping maintaining a separate identity for the majority of the time.

³⁵⁵ *Hora Novissima* was written during Dvořák's time in New York City; the Bohemian composer's music was certainly in the air as Parker was composing his cantata.

sits, as the penultimate movement, directly opposite movement II, “Hic breve vivitur,” which is sung by the quartet accompanied by reduced forces in the orchestra. The subtlety of the orchestration in movement II creates a fine balance with the a cappella chorus, and both sections alleviate the bombast of the two outer movements. “Urbs Syon unica” is particularly effective as a counterweight, with its interlocking arches and skillfully woven counterpoint acting as a palette cleanser before the fortissimo strains of brass and organ usher in the finale. The arias, which contain some of Parker’s most interesting and evocative writing, fill out the remainder of the structure with a clear eye toward symmetry and aesthetically pleasing form. The overall plan of *Hora Novissima* is below. A brief discussion of the individual movements follows.

Part I

- I. Introduction and Chorus
- II. Quartet
- III. Aria (Bass)
- IV. Chorus
- V. Aria (Soprano)
- VI. Quartet and Chorus

Part II

- VII. Solo (Tenor)³⁵⁶
- VIII. Double Chorus
- IX. Solo (Alto)
- X. Chorus a Cappella
- XI. Quartet and Chorus

³⁵⁶ The Novello score indicates the tenor and alto arias as “solos,” while the bass and soprano movements are listed as “arias.” No explanation is given, and there seems to be no substantive reason for the distinction. Novello’s convention will be followed in this listing; the two terms will be used interchangeably in the text of this document.

Part I

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the first movement of *Hora Novissima* is, in its essentials, a modified sonata form, with the principal modification being, as William Kearns notes, a middle section of contrasting, rather than developmental, material.³⁵⁷ The movement begins with an extended orchestral introduction, centered largely in a brooding E minor, that prominently features a motive of two descending fourths separated by an ascending major second. This motive and its ascending counterpart feature prominently enough in the thematic material of the entire piece to be referred to by Kearns and others as a germinal motive.



Ex. 6.1. Germinal motive of descending fourths connected by ascending major seconds.

Kearns also points out the appearance of descending chromatic material set against a dominant pedal,³⁵⁸ an effect which Parker uses to offset the static, declamatory nature of the initial entrance of the chorus in m. 64.

³⁵⁷ William K. Kearns, *Horatio Parker 1863-1919: A Study of His Life and Music*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois, 1965), 374.

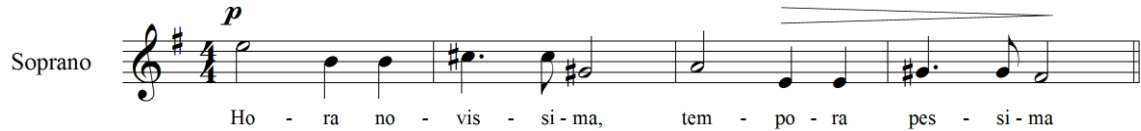
³⁵⁸ Ibid.



Example 6.2. Descending chromatic theme. Recurs throughout *Hora Novissima*.

Following the dramatic initial statement of the text “Hora novissima, tempora pessima sunt, vigilemus,”³⁵⁹ the key center destabilizes and Parker’s writing begins to create a sensation of disorientation, using fits and starts of material that seems thematic before cascading off into another key area. There is, for example, firm (and almost immediate) motion toward B major between the choral entrance in m. 64 and 78, with a strong cadence in B major on the downbeat of m. 78. Eschewing a typical return to the tonic key of E minor (or continuing material in B major), Parker instead chooses to hint at C major by m. 85, G major beginning in m. 88, and a migration toward B-flat major four measures later. After some more unsettled material, a restatement of the “Hora novissima” text occurs beginning in m. 108, this time in E major. Parker makes excellent use of the germinal motive, which featured so prominently in the orchestral introduction, in this moment:

³⁵⁹ It is the final hour, the times are very evil, let us keep watch. Several variant translations of the full text can be found in above in Chapter IV. Where the Latin text is referenced here, a translation will be provided, without comment, in the footnotes.



Ex. 6.3. Soprano choral part, Movement I, mm. 108-11.

The underlying material, however, never really settles into E major and, in fact, leads to an actual modulation to the enharmonically respelled chromatic mediant key of D-flat major in m. 112.

The key seemingly established, new thematic material is introduced in imitative counterpoint, a particular compositional strength of Parker's. The entrances of each voice do not follow the "correct" tonal plan, however, with the initial statement of the theme beginning on D flat answered by statements that start on G flat, E flat, and A flat respectively. This brief section, from mm. 112-129, yields to a restatement and re-voicing of previously heard musical material beginning in m. 130. The key area devolves from D-flat major to C minor at this point, before wending back to a recapitulation of sorts, in the original home key of E minor, beginning in m. 161. The measures from 112-160 function developmentally, even though some of the material is newly introduced, in that it further destabilizes any sense of key area and reintroduces just enough of the material from the exposition to create a sense of structural inevitability in the listener.

In keeping with the norms of sonata form, Parker stays a bit closer to the E minor key area in the recapitulation than he did in the initial statement of the theme. Where the exposition hinted at B-flat major, the recapitulation briefly gestures toward F major in m. 177 before returning to the home key by m. 184. An explosive statement of

the “Hora novissima” text, set to a more declamatory augmentation of the rhythm signifies the closing of the first movement. An extended coda follows, initiated by a *pianissimo* change of key to a gently shimmering E major.

Text is key to understanding Parker’s choice here: following a final statement of dire warning regarding coming judgment (“Hora novissima, tempora pessima sunt”), he turns to the comfort that will belong to the saved in Bernard’s vision of the heavenly city. Strings and harp dominate the orchestration as the choir sings, in unison, about the freedom and joy that will belong to the righteous following the terror of the final hour. The unison passage continues from m. 201 through m. 217, a neat balance to the choir’s initial entrance, also in unison, at the beginning of the movement. From judgment and fear to joy and freedom, the movement follows an almost Beethovenian arc – tragic to transcendent, E minor to E major. The final moments of the opening movement are firmly planted in the new home key of E major. Even the repetition of the opening text holds no more fear or agitation: the final hour is one of serene joy, and the movement closes with the now-hopeful word “vigilemus.” Parker has taken Bernard’s vision of terrible judgment and turned it into a vision of peace.³⁶⁰ The theme of the joys of the heavenly kingdom, which form only a portion of Bernard’s lengthy poem, will dominate the remainder of *Hora Novissima*.

The second movement, for solo quartet accompanied by a more classically proportioned orchestra dominated by divisi violins and the subtle colors of woodwinds and horn, is a meditation on the brevity of life on Earth. A brief life is conceived of as a blessing in Bernard’s poem, as earthly toils are traded for the rest of the new Jerusalem.

³⁶⁰ A discussion of the poem *De contemptu mundi*, from which Parker drew the libretto for *Hora Novissima*, can be found in Chapter IV above.

The opening statement of text, “Hic breve vivitur, hic breve plangitur,”³⁶¹ is stated in A minor, with the descending fourths germinal motive clearly outlined in the theme:



Ex. 6.4. Tenor part, Movement II, mm. 9-10.

Parker’s choice to use the quartet for this movement creates a striking effect: the voices of individuals lamenting, in imitative counterpoint, the shortness of life stands in wonderful contrast to the same voices, ten measures later, singing a mirror image of the opening text of the movement, “Non breve vivitur, non brever plangere, retrebuetur.”³⁶² To accentuate the marked changes in the fortunes of these souls, Parker changes the mode to A major in m. 19. To reinforce the change in mood, he also chooses to begin the theme on the downbeat (the initial iteration occurred on the upbeat of the first beat of the measure) and to include some subtle, upward chromatic motion, which adds to a feeling of ascension already established by the modal shift.



Ex. 6.5. Soprano part, Movement II, mm. 19-22.

A shift in the orchestration accompanies the change of mode: the initial statement of the theme is accompanied by strings, staccato, in a mostly descending pattern. While the

³⁶¹ Here one lives briefly, one weeps briefly.

³⁶² The payment will be to not live a short while, to not weep.

string accompaniment is still present in m. 19, the melodic material includes more upward motion. The strings are joined by woodwinds, also playing generally ascending material.

When the text returns to earth, so does the mode: a restatement of the words “Hic breve vivitur” in m. 39 is in A minor once again. Subtle shifts in the accompaniment create a different atmosphere, however. The staccato accompaniment figure is still present, but it is both re-voiced and re-orchestrated into the woodwinds. The strings have a pizzicato outline, and the soprano has a descant that prominently features leaps of an ascending minor sixth. All of these features create a significantly different soundscape when compared to the beginning of the movement.

After some appropriately unsettled chromatic writing paints themes of cross-bearing and battle, the movement once again settles in A major in m. 52. The key, with brief diversions of color, remains steady for the duration of the movement. Parker’s employment of cyclic ideas is apparent in m. 52, as well. Rather than restate thematic material specific to the second movement, he chooses to recall the descending chromatic line from the opening movement. The text at this moment (m. 52) is describing the fullness of the rewards the soul will obtain in heaven; one of the places that employs similar motion in the opening movement is found in m. 139, when the chorus is bemoaning the impending punishment of the unjust. The use of similar musical material to describe different sides of the same concept is an interesting, if perhaps too subtle to be aurally apparent to most listeners, compositional technique.

The quartet joins together in a lovely unison passage, beginning in m. 74, as they sing of heavenly rewards and an end to pain. The text “praemia plena”³⁶³ becomes a meditation, repeated several times as the second movement draws to its end. This section, mm. 81-90, marks one of the rare moments in Parker’s libretto in which the text is reordered in some way. The original text for this section of the poem features the word “Qualia,”³⁶⁴ a question referring to the rewards awaiting the just. Parker removes the question to provide an apt reminder of the poet’s hopeful vision for the elect.

While Parker’s choral writing is almost universally praised, at least in terms of contrapuntal skill and fecundity of melodic ideas, the choruses in *Hora Novissima* are largely ensconced in the norms of his day. They are, in a word, safe. Parker generally keeps to a plan of even two and four bar phrasing in his choral writing for this piece, partly, no doubt, because of the unrelenting poetic meter in Bernard’s poem. This is not to say that there is nothing interesting in the choruses, merely to point out that the evenness of the choral writing necessitated an outlet for more daring ideas somewhere else in the work. That outlet comes in the form of the solo sections in the piece, the first of which is the third movement, “Spe modo vivitur,” to be sung by the bass.

The third movement is the first section of *Hora Novissima* that begins with a statement of the principal theme of the movement from the outset. The violins and clarinets play, in m. 1, the music that the bass will sing in m. 9. The doubling of flutes and clarinets provides a darker-hued upper orchestration than a pairing of violins with flute or oboe might have and gives the movement a unique timbre when compared to the sections that surround it. Later in the movement, beginning in m. 55 as the key area

³⁶³ Full rewards.

³⁶⁴ What kind or Which ones.

changes, bassoons and cellos are paired to create another distinct coloration. Still later, around m. 73, clarinets and violins will once again be paired, this time to play chase with oboes and violas in yet another subtle shift in color.

The vocal writing, more sinuous and line driven than the ensemble style of the first two movements, is described by Kearns as having achieved a “new freedom in rhythmic flexibility and organic melodic growth.”³⁶⁵ The best evidence of this freedom can be found beginning in m. 33, at which point the meter begins undulating between 4/4 and 3/4. Beyond the essential instability of a meter that functions in seven, Parker further elongates phrases through the employment of occasional 5/4, 2/4, and 3/2 measures. These changes obliterate the comfortable phrasing so evident in much of the choral writing, creating enough rhythmic vitality to balance the less adventurous movements. The climactic moment in the third movement, around m. 41, features an eleven-beat setting of the words “Patria splendida;”³⁶⁶ Parker adroitly underscores his principal interpretation of Bernard’s poem (or at least the portions chosen for the libretto) as an essentially hopeful one by once again drawing attention to the richness of the poet’s vision of the world to come. The tonal plan of the third movement recalls the two previous ones: a progression from minor to major, another way in which Parker creates a sense of motion toward the goal set forth in the poem’s text.

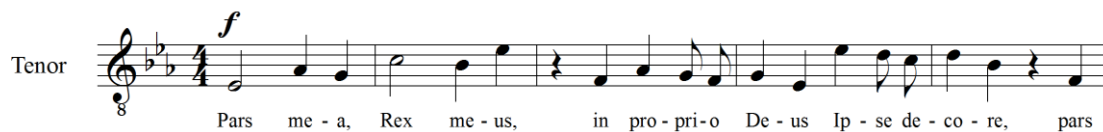
Rather than go to the same well one too many times, Parker abandons the tragic to transcendent arc for the fourth movement, the introduction and fugue “Pars mea, rex meus,”³⁶⁷ which begins and ends in E-flat major. The fugue, which follows a 26-

³⁶⁵ Kearns, *Horatio Parker*, (Ph.D. Diss.), 386.

³⁶⁶ Splendid country.

³⁶⁷ My portion, my king.

measure introduction, has as its subject an inverted form of the germinal motive, using a series of three ascending perfect fourths separated by descending seconds:



Ex. 6.6. Fugue subject, first presented in the tenor part, Movement IV, mm. 27-31.

For reference, the germinal motive is included below:



Ex. 6.7. Germinal motive.

Kearns posits that if the entirety of *Hora Novissima* can be envisioned as a choral symphony,³⁶⁸ the use of an inverted form of the work's principal thematic material could be seen as developmental in function.³⁶⁹ Whether Parker's overall concept was intentionally symphonic in nature must remain a matter of conjecture. Other moments in the work, however, reinforce Kearns's supposition, notably the presence of a scherzo-like double chorus movement ("Stant Syon atria," discussed in further detail below) in an area of the piece that is, at least superficially, analogous to the third movement slot of a symphony.

³⁶⁸ Several commentators have used this term to describe *Hora Novissima*; only Kearns has tried to explain it using actual examples from the work.

³⁶⁹ Kearns William K., *Horatio Parker 1863-1919: His Life, Music, and Ideas*, Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1990, 108.

Regardless of its theoretical identity, “Pars mea, Rex meus” is most definitely a climactic point of arrival in the structure of *Hora Novissima* and an especially apt balance to the metric freedom of the bass aria “Spe modo vivitur,” which immediately precedes it. The fugal writing in the fourth movement is balanced, technically impressive, and intentionally rule-bound, perhaps to illustrate the active vision of both people and the earth becoming perfect.³⁷⁰

The introduction, from mm. 1-26, serves two primary purposes: it is both a “thematic reservoir,” hinting at the material that will follow, and a neatly crafted modulation from the D tonal center of the bass aria to the bright E-flat major of the fugue.³⁷¹ Once the fugue begins, in the tenor voice paired with horns, the complete subject is stated 12 times, with four complete statements (one in each voice part) in each of the three major divisions of the movement. The outer sections are in the home key of E-flat major; the central section in the relative minor, C. When the subject returns in the second E-flat major section, Parker leans toward material in the subdominant rather than a strict adherence to the tonic-dominant presentation that dominated the exposition.

One of the episodes stands out as particularly well chosen to complement its text. Immediately following an emphatic, triple-forte moment of arrival in the home key of E-flat major (mm. 99-105), a two measure transition to the subdominant key of A-flat major, accompanied by a rapid diminuendo to piano, leads to a gentle chorale call-and-response between the chorus and the woodwinds in m. 107. The text, from m. 107, is another meditation on the changes that will come following the end of things. In

³⁷⁰ It is to be assumed that Bernard’s concept of perfection would be more akin to the idea of completed or whole, rather than our more contemporary idea of flawlessness. Either reading of the word “perfect” works well with Parker’s choice to set the text as a severe, academically correct fugue.

³⁷¹ Kearns, *Horatio Parker, Life Music, and Ideas*, 108.

this case (paraphrased), Jacob will become Israel and Leah will become Rachel; Zion will be perfected.³⁷² The transition to a gentler, subdominant tonality coupled with Parker's use of a modified, augmented version of a previously employed scalar motive (see mm. 19-23, 69-70, and 79-80) creates a literal feeling of significant change to supplement the evocative text. Even through this brief contrasting passage, the germinal motive is present, with ascending fourths creating the principal outline of the soprano melody in mm. 107 and 108 and a diminished, altered form of the subject present in the bass part in the same measures.

tranquillo
p

Soprano

Tunc Ja - cob Is - ra - el, et

Ex.6.8. Soprano part, Movement IV, mm. 107-108.

tranquillo
p

Bass

Tunc Ja - cob Is - ra - el, et

Ex. 6.9. Bass part, Movement IV, mm. 107-108.

Salvific change does not come easily, however: immediately following the chorale section, mm. 107-118, the stretto of the fugue begins over a dominant pedal in m. 119 and continues through a ritardando in m. 127. The final working out of the subject begins in m. 128, and it is an impressive, majestic display of contrapuntal skill,

³⁷² Jacob steals his brother's birthright and wrestles with God on his way to becoming Israel; Leah is the less desirable sister that Jacob must wed in order to obtain permission to marry the beautiful Rachel. Bernard, and many other Christian writers through the millennia, would likely have seen in these biblical characters allegories of redemption through perseverance.

even in a work full of finely wrought counterpoint. The subject is stated in augmentation, in unison, by the chorus while it is presented in its original form in the winds and organ. The strings and bassoons have running streams of eighth notes bubbling underneath the dual presentation of the subject. The overall effect is powerful in both sheer volume and emotional impact.

The massive ending strains of the fourth movement provide a major sectional division in the work. If the first four movements, in general terms, can be considered the first major section of a symphonic structure, perhaps movements V and VI might be thought of as a second major division, in the place normally occupied by a slow movement in most symphonic forms. Movement V, a lilting 9/8 soprano aria in A-flat major, can certainly be considered the beginning of a new, gentler section of the work, one centered on the joys of the new Jerusalem already accomplished, rather than the mixed fear and excitement of the unknown.

In addition to the subdominant shift, from E-flat major to A-flat major, Parker also chooses a markedly different orchestration to underscore arrival in the beautiful country of the aria's title: muted strings, pianissimo bassoon and horn, and a dark-hued clarinet solo begin a relaxed, meditative introduction. Upon the entrance of the soprano soloist in m. 19, singing the text "O bona patria, Lumina sobria, te speculantur.,"³⁷³ the central accompaniment shifts to the harp, almost as radical a departure from the extremes of full organ and brass as the orchestra can accomplish. Parker's tongue may be planted gently in his cheek at this moment: the soprano's contemplation of the celestial country accompanied by an angel's harp would almost be a caricature of

³⁷³ O good homeland, sober eyes watch for you.

Victorian parlor music, if not for the solid architecture and orchestration of the remainder of the movement.

The soprano's initial theme returns twice more, in measures 41 and 74. Each return features difference in accompaniment: the former features strings on the first beat of each measure and a syncopated triplet figure off of beat three in the woodwinds; the latter a much fuller background of murmuring, ascending sixteenth notes in the woodwinds, shimmering sixteenth-note arpeggios in the harp, a pizzicato syncopated figure in most of the strings, and a doubling of the soprano's melody in the cello. Each statement of the initial melody further grounds the aria in its bliss, with the harp becoming ever more active and ebullient in supporting the serenity of the soprano part..

Even between iterations of the soprano's main theme, there is not much in the way of consternation to offset the bliss. The aria follows the basic outline of a rondo, ABACA, with an introduction and an extended coda. The B and C sections, in C minor and C major respectively, function more as a reminiscent furrowing of the brow than a significant contrast to the gentle main theme. The soprano is shaking off the memory of the Earthly, perhaps, before the coda ends the work with longer note durations in the soprano part (based largely on the contour of the A section melody) and more heavenly arpeggiations from the harp, strings, and upper woodwinds.

Of the four solo movements, "O bona patria" is the simplest, both in terms of form and with regard to melodic materials employed. As such, it is well timed and placed in the overall form of *Hora Novissima*, as a sort of musical palette cleanser following the intense counterpoint of "Pars mea, Rex meus." In the arc of the libretto,

“O bona patria” serves much the same purpose, changing the state and clearing the way for finale to the first part of the cantata.

“Tu sine littore,” the sixth movement of *Hora Novissima*, is the closing section of Part I of the work. It is set for chorus and solo quartet, with a prominent moment for the soprano soloist. A fortissimo statement of the germinal motive in G-sharp minor, an enharmonic parallel to the ending key of the soprano aria begins the movement. This is followed by an extended introduction that serves as a mirror image to the beginning of the first movement in that it begins emphatically and ends gently, on the F-sharp dominant seventh chord that will lead to the new key of B major, in m. 36. The shifts in mood between the two introductions follow a similar pattern, with the brooding build-up to the climactic, fortissimo, unison entrance of the choir in movement one, a moment of cataclysm and fear, answered by the dissipation of that fear into another unison entrance by the choir, this time one of gentle serenity to the words “tu sine littore, tu sine tempore, fons modo rivus.”³⁷⁴ The use of unison choral singing in both the opening chorus and the finale of the first part seems to imply that the scenes being described are universals, moments in time that many human beings will encounter.

Where the soloists represent well the yearning or fear of individuals, the chorus functions logically as emblem of larger groupings of humanity, perhaps those most in fear of damnation in the opening of the piece contrasted with the elect of God in the sixth movement. It is possible that the stormy introduction that precedes the choral entrance is a hint of purgatory, a theological construct that was certainly in the air both during Bernard’s era (only a little more than a century before Dante) and Parker’s

³⁷⁴ Now you are a never-ending stream, a timeless fountain.

(Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, based on a book of the same name with which many in the English-speaking world would have been familiar, premiered just seven years after *Hora Novissima*).

Kearns considers the sixth movement to be “largely a recapitulation of the materials found in the opening chorus.”³⁷⁵ While this is true, the employment of those materials in new ways adds immensely to understanding Parker's concept of the libretto and points to the composer's impressive ability to craft cyclic thematic material into coherent narrative support. Just as it is in the beginning of the work, the germinal motive is present for much of “Tu sine littore,” often presented in ways designed to illustrate the changed mood of the poem, and as Kearns points out, to reframe the narrative of the first part.

A thundering presentation of the germinal motive opens the movement, presented in the same inescapable unison used in the choral entrances described above, across large swaths of the woodwinds, brasses, and strings. The descending chromatic line from the first movement is also present beginning in m. 19, reinforcing the composer's intention to call the opening of the work to mind. Following the transition to the relative key of B major, the germinal motive is transformed into an accompanying figure: half notes in the upper woodwinds and first violins shimmering over the gentle strains of the choral entrance in m. 37.

³⁷⁵ Kearns, *Horatio Parker, Life Music and Ideas*, 108.

Flute

pp

Soprano

pp

Tu si - ne lit - to - re Tu si - ne tem - po - re,

Ex. 6.10. Second Flute and Soprano parts, Movement VI, mm. 37-40.

The germinal motive is further transformed to staccato quarter notes, on the weaker beats of two and four,³⁷⁶ beginning with the quartet's repeat of the choral entrance in m. 45. In essence, the dominant place of the motive in its original form, associated with the terror of the end times, is muted and transformed – backgrounded and placed in a role subservient to the music of peace and joy. Parker seems to be illustrating Bernard's contention that the elect (undoubtedly relatively few in number) need not fear the wrathful trumpets of the judgment.

The principal theme of the sixth movement is presented first at the choral entrance in m. 37. It is largely scalar, with a sequenced line broken only by a descending major third in the middle. The germinal motive is present, in a modified form, in the second half of this theme, mm. 41-43, with the second descending fourth interrupted by the softening influence of a minor third. In order to create an even eight-measure period, Parker repeats the final section of text with a further modification of the germinal motive. This subtle rhythmic change to the prevailing poetic meter also serves to illustrate the timeless atmosphere described in the text.

³⁷⁶ The motive is also present in half notes in the clarinet at this moment.

Soprano *pp*
Tu si - ne lit - to - re Tu si - ne tem - po - re,

S
Fons mo - do ri - vus, fons mo - do ri - vus,

Ex. 6.11. Soprano part, Movement VI, mm. 37-44.

The quartet then enters, singing the same thematic material, but in the mediant-related key of D major. Parker uses a harp-accompanied,³⁷⁷ meditative alternation between chorus and quartet to effect a transition to E-flat major³⁷⁸ in m. 77. Some new thematic material is introduced in this transition, including a scalar melody that seems related to the hymn-like principal theme of the movement and to the introductory clarinet solo in “O bona patria.”

The melodic material in m. 77, which was clearly presaged by a muted violin solo in m. 58, is based on a descending melodic curve, making it a good counter to the movement’s principal theme. More interesting, perhaps, than the content is the separation of the chorus into seven parts (SSATTBB), beginning in m. 83. This is the first time in *Hora Novissima* that the choral parts have featured significant divisi writing. The men of the chorus, still divisi, accompany a soprano solo set against a clarinet solo that draws the listener back to the beginning of “O bona patria” again.

³⁷⁷ The harp seems to make prominent appearances at moments when the text is describing the beauties of heaven. See the above discussion of the fifth movement, “O bona patria.”

³⁷⁸ E-flat major can also be considered to be in a chromatic median relationship with the home key of B major, although this requires an enharmonic respelling to D-sharp major, a key only in theory.

Following a brief storm of agitation (cold feet?), a harp arpeggio brings us back to the home key of B major and a recapitulation of the principal theme of the movement in m. 125. One of the loveliest moments of counterpoint in all of *Hora Novissima* follows in m. 133. The choir begins an ascending chain of dissonances at the second, some of which are unaccompanied to clarify the texture, which builds to a climax in m. 148. The text here is: Your bridegroom, the Lamb, is there and you stand in beauty before Him. Your whole occupation will be sweet songs, to sing sweetly.

Soprano
 Ag - nus ad - est ti - bi,

Alto
 Ag - nus ad - est ti - bi, Spon - sus ad -

Tenor
 Ag - nus ad - est ti - bi, Spon - sus ad - est ti - bi,

Bass
 Lux _____

S
 Spon - sus ad - est ti - bi, Lux spe - ci - o - sa.

A
 est ti - bi, Lux spe - ci - o - sa.

T
 Lux spe - ci - o - sa.

B
 spe - ci - o - sa, spe - ci - o - sa.

Ex. 6.12. Choral parts, Movement VI, mm. 133-140.

All of this activity builds to the climactic wedding scene, one that contains perhaps the clearest example of humor in the work. The text for most of the sixth movement deals with the allegory of the church (and therefore its people) as bride of Christ; after the wedding is celebrated, the glorious strains of Mendelssohn's famous wedding march, beginning in m. 158, accompany the word "conjubilare." One can imagine knowing smiles in the audience as the wedding comes to its climax. A brief, joyful coda, returning to the alternation between chorus and soloists and reminiscent of an opera finale, brings the sixth movement, and Part I, to its close.

Part II

Movement VII, the tenor aria “Urbs Syon aurea,”³⁷⁹ serves as an idyllic entr’acte to the second part of *Hora Novissima*. Kearns notes that the aria follows, loosely, the contour and formally free, through-composed plan of “Ingemisco,” the famous tenor aria from the “Dies irae” section of Verdi’s *Requiem*.³⁸⁰ This is certainly true in the sweep and arch of the tenor’s ever-evolving line and in much of the accompaniment, particularly the string parts from mm. 29-38. There is certainly something of the operatic or Verdi-esque present in these and other moments, but there are also compositional choices of Parker’s that tie the aria firmly to the rest of *Hora Novissima*. Of particular note is the employment of five solo cellos as the only orchestral accompaniment for the first twenty measures of the movement: Parker’s ability to create orchestral soundscapes that illustrate subtle differences between earthly life and the heavenly city is well in evidence at the beginning of the tenor aria. The five cellos cover the normal range of the full string section, but the color of the sound is changed from the orchestral norm, darker hued and more similar in timbre from top to bottom than the standard string section. The choice to use five cellos instead of a more standard quintet of the section principals creates just enough distinction in sound to underscore the continuation of, or perhaps a meditation on, the wedding celebration that drew the first part of *Hora Novissima* to its conclusion.

In addition to the uniqueness of Parker’s orchestration, there are three other moments in “Urbs Syon aurea” that serve to connect the aria directly with the rest of the work. An accompanying figure that begins in m. 39 recalls a similar figure in mm. 145-

³⁷⁹ Golden city of Zion.

³⁸⁰ Kearns, *Horatio Parker, Life, Music, and Ideas*, 114-115.

150 of the first movement, the recurrent descending chromatic theme, present in several movements, can be found in the woodwinds, mm. 49-54 (and in inversion in the strings beginning in m. 69), and the successive fourths of the germinal motive highlight the tenor's climactic entrance in m. 61.



Ex. 6.13. Tenor solo, Movement VII, mm. 61-63

These fourths are ascending, in keeping with Parker's use of motivic development to illustrate the differences between the earthly and the heavenly. Ascending fourths are prevalent in the second part of the cantata.

If the sixth movement was an allegorical wedding and the seventh a reflection on the bliss of the church as celestial bride, movement VIII, the lengthy double chorus "Stant Syon atria,"³⁸¹ is the wedding feast. Parker seems keen to illustrate the many types of joy in Bernard's vision of heaven; "Stant Syon atria" provides a welcome dose of joy amid the fervent, but quiet, bliss. Continuing with the aforementioned symphonic plan for the work, the eighth movement could be considered the scherzo of the piece, although, with its repeated returns to the first theme it seems to follow a formal structure more akin to a rondo.

The double chorus format allows Parker free rein to employ the full force of his significant skill in contrapuntal writing. While the efficacy of Rheinberger's skill as a pedagogue is certainly evident, Parker's counterpoint in "Stan Syon atria" is more

³⁸¹ The halls of Zion stand.

ebullient, less detached, and brasher in construction than his mentor's style would normally allow. Parker approaches Rheinberger's technical ability, but his personality is markedly different and yields a more emotional, less ethereal end result. His choice to include virtually the complete orchestra also creates a major difference between Parker's style and the severe, a cappella sacred music of his teacher.³⁸²

"Stant Syon atria" opens like a crowd scene in an opera, with a dancing hemiola figure in the woodwinds answered by a partial statement of the movement's principal theme in the upper strings, leading to the first true statement of the theme, by Chorus I, in m. 13.



Ex. 6.14. Soprano part, Chorus I, Movement VIII, mm. 13-20.

The hemiola figure, in addition to providing rhythmic vitality, serves to extend the unyielding dactylic hexameter of the text into an eight bar musical phrase. Chorus II answers immediately with a version of the melody in diminution, essentially completing the pattern set forth by the woodwinds and strings in the introduction.



Ex. 6.15. Soprano Part, Chorus II, Movement VIII, mm. 19-24.

³⁸² A work to compare might be Rheinberger's excellent *Missa in E-flat major*, Op. 109.

Parker's command of choral and orchestral textures within the dense contrapuntal possibilities of the accompanied double chorus is almost universally praised in criticism, with Kearns noting that the "composer's skill in handling the two choruses is evident in his effortless shifting from chordal to imitative to antiphonal writing."³⁸³ Equally evident is his ability to create new material derived from the germinal motive. A careful look at the theme of "Stant Syon atria" shows that it is an inverted form of the germinal motive: two fourths, ascending in this instance, joined by a major second (see Ex. 4.14 and 4.15 above). Prominent ascending fourths feature throughout the movement (see mm. 35-42 and 193-205 for further examples), but the most ingenious use of the germinal motive may be in the countermelody that accompanies the principal theme beginning in m. 152. This countermelody soars in the sopranos of both choruses and in the upper woodwinds and violins in octaves. It is based on the same inverted version of the germinal motive, ascending fourths rather than the original form's descending, but in an exhilarating augmentation that is then sequenced up a major second in m. 154.



Ex. 6.16. Soprano part, Movement VII, mm. 152-155.

As if to remind the listener of how far the motive has come in its transformation, a statement that recalls the original form, in which the first of the descending fourths is

³⁸³ Kearns, *Horatio Parker*, PhD. Diss, 377.

replaced by a fifth, follows immediately in m. 156 in soprano parts through both orchestra and chorus:



Ex. 6.17. Soprano part, Movement VIII, mm. 156-157.

Rhythmic interest is maintained throughout this movement in two ways: the use of the hemiola figure mentioned above and a changing emphasis brought about by shifts in meter from 3/4 to 9/4, back to 3/4 before finally settling in a broad 12/4 for the *maestoso* ending. The final moments of “Stant Syon atria” feature the countermelody discussed above prominently against the more rhythmically active original theme; these are answered by descending lines in the low brass and strings to create a colossal finale to the movement (so massive, in fact, that the timpanist has an indication to play *ffff* in the last two measures).

The presence of so massive an ending might initially seem a structural weakness in the overall form of the work, which has at least three other similarly gargantuan codas, but the hugeness of the ending fits the text quite well. The choruses come together to sing “Regis ibi thronus, agminis et sonus, est epulantis,”³⁸⁴ approaching the throne of God while singing. Parker’s solution to imagining an encounter with the deity enthroned is filled with light and joy, standing in interesting contrast to the single orchestral chord that represents the same concept in in Elgar’s *Dream of Gerontius*.

³⁸⁴ There is the King’s throne and the sound of the feasting multitude.

Although it meanders a bit, being considered unsettled tonally and, in Kearns's words "quite forward-looking" for its time,³⁸⁵ the alto solo in Movement IX, "Gens duce splendida"³⁸⁶ is, architecturally, in a fairly straightforward ABA form. Martial dotted rhythms, outlining a key center of C minor, introduce the aria, previewing the text, which refers to the victorious elect of God standing, robed in white, before the throne. The solid, declamatory nature of the alto's largely stepwise melody is offset by busy interjections, often in motion contrary or oblique to that of the alto, from the woodwinds and brass.

The middle section, which shifts from 3/4 to 4/4 time in m. 55, leaves behind the dotted figures and replaces them with a gently undulating line, at the piano dynamic level, in the strings. Quarter-note sextuplets, set against the otherwise largely duple accompaniment and solo line, create a sensation of flowing as the soloist sings of the perfection of the saved as they live in Zion. This "flowing" music may be why Parker's mother, in composing the singing English translation of the text, included a reference to the famous hymn *Peace like a River*.³⁸⁷ The accompanimental figures build in intensity, with a climax of activity occurring from mm. 74-81; perhaps ironically, the alto is singing that the people in Zion are without turmoil or strife. The strings effect a brief transition back to the martial strains of the A section, which begins with a truncated version of the movement's introduction, which is followed by a subtly altered recapitulation, and the movement ends with a dynamic indication of *ppp*, preparing the next movement, for chorus a cappella, quite nicely. The final chord of the coda is C

³⁸⁵ Kearns, *Horatio Parker, Life Music, and Ideas*, 116.

³⁸⁶ The illustrious race with its leader.

³⁸⁷ See Chapter IV concerning *De contemptu mundi* and its various translations.

major; the Picardy third allows the chorus to hear the tonic triad for their entrance clearly. Parker's background in church and choral music is apparent in this unobtrusive, yet important, moment.

The germinal motive is hidden enough in the alto aria to make one question whether it is present at all; perhaps the most obvious instance of its inclusion occurs in the solo line beginning at m. 112:



Ex. 6.18. Alto solo, Movement IX, mm. 112-117.

The motive is much more present in movement X, the a cappella chorus “Urbs Syon unica.” This chorus is one of the most interesting historical documents in *Hora Novissima*, and it, perhaps more than any other section, betrays the work as an artifact of the late nineteenth century. Intentional archaisms mix freely with a controlled chromaticism, calling up ghosts of the Renaissance as if through a foggy lens. Parker's contrapuntal ability again comes to the fore, as does his noticeable skill in using material associated with other schools or composers in new ways. Of this movement, Kearns points out the skillful dichotomy the composer employs:

The smooth, steady rhythmic flow, the arched curve of the principal theme, and the use of successive points of imitation based on fragments of the theme all allude to Renaissance style. Even a few archaic mannerisms such as the use of the open fifth and open octave intervals are present. Nevertheless, the tonal

scheme, chord progressions,³⁸⁸ climactic sections, and the constant dynamic fluctuations belong to the style of the nineteenth century.³⁸⁹

“Urbs Syon unica” serves the purpose of setting the stage for the finale of *Hora Novissima*, which is gargantuan in both length and volume of sound. By removing the orchestra and writing in a more severe, academic style, Parker allows the lushness of the finale to function as an appropriately massive climax. The ending of this a cappella movement may be the softest moment in the entire work; the finale follows immediately with a fortissimo blast from the brasses and organ that features yet another chromatic mediant relationship, with the C major key center of the chorus yielding to a bright E major, thereby completing the work’s tonal journey back to its home tonality.³⁹⁰

True to its Renaissance forebears, the form of “Urbs Syon unica” is determined by its text, with new text being set to new music. There are two principal themes, one of which is clearly derived from the germinal motive. It features a series of two ascending fourths (one of which is interrupted) joined by an ascending major second. In keeping with a Renaissance sensibility, the first then descends back to the tonic pitch to create a pleasing arch. The dominant pitch features prominently in the theme, reminiscent in some ways of a reciting tone. The theme shifts keys before it even seems to have arrived at any repose, and the dovetailing of the material doesn’t let up until the initial sentence of text has all but exhausted its contrapuntal possibilities.

³⁸⁸ The chord progressions are clearly vertically conceived, a significant departure from the high Renaissance styles of Obrecht and Josquin, to whose work this movement was compared by early critics including W.J. Henderson of the *New York Times*. Later writers fail to see any but a superficial resemblance to Renaissance style. Like many composers, Parker likely wanted to allude to the perceived purity of the so-called Golden Age of church music without resorting to literal imitation.

³⁸⁹ Kearns, *Horatio Parker*, PhD. Diss., 379.

³⁹⁰ The opening movement begins in E minor.



Ex. 6.19. Main theme, Movement X, mm. 1-5.

The second theme outlines sixths, descending and then ascending in an inverted arch that stands well in opposition to the first theme. The melodic material that forms the basis of the second theme is drawn (in a modified form) from the middle of the first theme, another excellent example of Parker's skill. This theme is more tonally restless than the principal theme, and this material may be serving solely as a transition musically, but the presence of the melodic content in both soprano and bass, set to a new text, gives it a thematic function.



Ex. 6.20. Secondary theme, Movement X, mm. 29-33.

The most overt use of the germinal motive in movement X can be found beginning in m. 53, when the four parts function as a stretto on the principal theme of the movement, but with the beginning pitch of each of the parts' entrances outlining the fourths of the motive.

The image shows a musical score for four vocal parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The music is in 4/4 time and features the lyrics "Urbs Sy - on u - ni-ca, urbs Sy - on, man". The Soprano part begins with a *mf* dynamic and a half note G4. The Alto part begins with a *mf* dynamic and a half note G3. The Tenor part begins with a *mf* dynamic and a half note G2. The Bass part begins with a *mf* dynamic and a half note G1. The lyrics are distributed across the parts: Soprano (Urbs Sy - on u - ni-ca, urbs Sy - on, man), Alto (Urbs Sy - on u - ni-ca, urbs Sy - on, man), Tenor (Urbs Sy - on u - ni-ca, urbs,), and Bass (Urbs Sy - on u - ni-ca,).

Ex. 6.21. Choral parts, Movement X, mm. 53-57.

The ten-minute finale to *Hora Novissima* is a fine counterweight to the brooding opening of the work. The germinal motive, which has appeared in so many different guises throughout the work, is completed, or perhaps “perfected,” by its conversion into a series of ascending perfect fifths which also outline, and therefore underscore as markers of key, the tonic and subdominant chords of the home key of E major. That the final movement is in E major is another indicator that the formal structure of the work can be viewed as essentially symphonic. Evidence pointing to the piece as a choral symphony is inconclusive, but symphonic elements are present in enough places to create a convincing argument that the cyclicism so prevalent in nineteenth-century symphonic works is at work in *Hora Novissima*, and that Parker’s employment of those devices was intentional.

The principal theme of the finale is an eleven-measure subject,³⁹¹ first stated in full in the choral soprano part beginning in m. 41 (following an extended introduction), that leads to the dominant key of B major by the alto entrance in m. 52. A typical fugal alternation between tonic and dominant ensues; this is a comforting and levelling moment after the more mediant-driven relationships that characterize a substantial portion of the work; it also emphasizes the fourth/fifth thematic drive of the entire piece.

Soprano *mf*
Urbs Sy-on in-cly-ta, tur-ris et e-di-ta, lit-

S
- to-re tu-to, Te-pe-to, te-co-lo, te

S
fla-gro, te vo-lo, te vo-lo can-to, sa-lu-to, _____

Ex. 6.22. Main theme of the finale, Movement XI, mm. 41-52

The remainder of the movement is a series of quartet and choral moments separated by two orchestral interludes. These provide a loose outline or reminiscence of the entire piece, recalling the thematic fourths of the germinal motive and the slithering descending chromatic line first encountered toward the beginning of the work. There are several instances of fourths expanding to fifths, reinforcing the idea of growth or completion in the germinal motive. The principal theme of the finale is sung in unison

³⁹¹ Some analysts would point to the first two measures as the principal thematic material; the fact that this section of the movement is fugal in nature seems to indicate that the entirety of the subject should be considered thematic.

by the chorus in m. 194; unison singing by the choir was in abundant evidence in the first, fourth, and sixth movements. The soloists and choir participate in a call and response beginning in m. 216, and there is a brief moment of eight-part writing in the chorus in m. 228. The presence of these devices provides a definite unity to the closing of the work, reminding the listener of the journey that the libretto has outlined: fear to hope to bliss. The final line of text, repeated from earlier in the movement, translates as “blessed is the man whose portion is God,” which occurs in the middle of a section of poetry but matches Parker’s reading of Bernard’s poetry so well that it provides a fitting end to *Hora Novissima*.

Chapter VII

Conclusions

*It is a singular and moving fact that the least material of all art forms should be in some respects the most imperishable. A fire in an art gallery can destroy a painter's masterpiece; shells thrown by enemy cannon can shatter a cathedral; and yet sounds, which seem as fugitive as gusts of wind, can be controlled, as more substantial things cannot be controlled, by the creative will of a composer.*³⁹²

More than creative will is required for a composer's work to maintain a firm place in the repertory. The vagaries of taste and time ensure that many compositions that were considered worthy in, even emblematic of, their eras are neither performed nor much studied after the time of their genesis. A large swath of late 19th- and early 20th-century American works have disappeared almost completely except for references in specialist scholarship,³⁹³ and the initial intent of this document was to assist in resurrecting one of these "neglected masterpieces." Further study shows, however, that *Hora Novissima* was not quite as invisible as the scholarly record may have initially indicated. Parker's work was well regarded enough to have continued receiving at least a few performances in every decade from its composition to the present, and there is enough of a trail of written criticism to create a fairly representative story of the piece, or at least the musical establishment's view of it. The piece has endured through a fortuitous mixture of hope, nostalgia, curiosity, and sincere belief in its merit. What general consensus exists regarding its place in the repertoire is also colored by this mixture of influences.

³⁹² MSS 32, The Horatio Parker Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Box 37, Folder 4: Eulogy given by Howard C. Robbins for Parker Memorial Service at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City, March 7, 1920.

³⁹³ This pattern holds, to some degree, in virtually every era and place, of course.

Chapter V dealt with these influences in chronological fashion, beginning with the exultant hopes of the earliest reviewers of *Hora Novissima*, who generally found in the work both a masterful composition and an emblem of hope for the future of American music. The view of the work as a masterpiece, or at least as a composition of significant worth, dominates the early criticism on both sides of the Atlantic, and references to Parker's excellent skill, particularly as a melodist and contrapuntist, never completely disappear from discussions of the piece. More recent assessments, including those of Nichola Tawa³⁹⁴ and William Kearns,³⁹⁵ are somewhat more in line with the earliest writers, finding a great deal of excellence in *Hora Novissima*.

Some 20th-century criticism, writing from a significantly different aesthetic and historical vantage point, derided the piece as emblematic of the immaturity of American art in the late 19th century. Discussions of the work centered on its apparent derivativeness, an aspect of Parker's compositional style that even his earliest critics had noted to some degree. It has proved difficult for scholars in an era that prizes individualism and innovation, sometimes even above aesthetic concerns and certainly above craftsmanship and training, to form an opinion of Parker's work devoid of its relationship to the trends that would arise after his death.³⁹⁶

As time passes and the great aesthetic debates of the mid-20th century become history rather than current events, a more even approach appears to be on the rise. The works of Horatio Parker and his New England colleagues are in the process of being

³⁹⁴ Nicholas E. Tawa, *From Psalm to Symphony: A History of Music in New England* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2001), 171-9.

³⁹⁵ William Kearns, *Horatio W. Parker 1863-1919: A Study of His Life and Music*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois, 1965.

³⁹⁶ See Edward Robinson's discussion of Parker's works in Chapter V above.

reassessed, and while their place in the repertoire is far from assured, renewed interest in them as musical (as opposed to historical) artifacts is a promising beginning to a better understanding of their worth.

What consensus there is concerning the merits of *Hora Novissima* has generally centered on the excellent compositional craft of its creator. Parker's deft skill in counterpoint is virtually unchallenged by even his fiercest critics, and his ability as a melodist is praised with some frequency. That these hallmarks of his compositional style, especially as they pertain to *Hora Novissima*, are so universally agreed upon reinforces the concept of Parker as a composer whose works merit further discussion and study. The work initially seems largely absent from both the repertoire and the work of academia, but its tenaciousness alone has earned it a more in depth analysis.

The analysis of the piece, presented in the sixth chapter of this study, certainly points to an excellently crafted piece. Beyond the confines of musical craft, Parker's adroitness in the wedding of text to music is readily apparent, as well. This skill would serve Parker throughout his career, as the majority of his output is music for voices in various combinations. His ability to successfully negotiate a difficult, potentially monotonous, poetic meter is remarkable. Each of *Hora Novissima*'s movements, and usually each of the various sections within them, contains a different solution to avoid the possibility of rhythmic monotony. To counterpoint and melody, then, can be added a deep understanding of the rhythmic vitality required to sustain large-scale compositions. In simplest terms, *Hora Novissima* is indeed well crafted, but it is also impressively artistic. Parker is able to balance bombast and delicacy in equal measure: while many of the effective moments in the piece occur in the oft-praised choral

movements, the solo movements are filled with surprising choices in orchestration and phrasing that add to the overall aesthetic impact of the cantata. Two clear examples mentioned above in Chapter VI are the employment of the subtle colors of a cello quintet and the climactic extensions of phrase and range in the tenor aria “Urbs Syon aurea,” the seventh movement.

While the basic architecture of *Hora Novissima* does pay clear homage to earlier works, Parker’s employment of melodic, dramatic, contrapuntal, and textual elements is unique. The overall impact of the piece is not one of staid academicism, but one of enormous vitality and variety. This variety is consciously employed in the service of the libretto, while the presence of a germinal motive that reappears throughout the work creates a sense of unity throughout the work. In short, *Hora Novissima* bears close scrutiny quite well: it contains a well-balanced mixture of unity and diversity and displays a skilled, erudite compositional style that manages to successfully unite Parker’s considerable abilities as a composer of music for the church with his developing gift as a melodist.³⁹⁷

This document has hopefully served a twofold purpose: to provide a resource for conductors interested in programming *Hora Novissima* and to contribute in some small way to a renewed scholarly interest in the work. The fascinating story of the piece’s critical reception over the past 120 years will be of use to scholars studying the music of Parker’s era, but the anecdotes in Chapter V should also serve conductors well as they find ways to engage their ensembles in the life of the piece and its composer. Many

³⁹⁷ This gift would come to full fruition in Parker’s two operas, *Mona* and *Fairyland*, both winners of significant prizes. See Chapter III above for a brief discussion these works and Parker’s growth as a creator of melody.

great works have stories associated with their early performances. The exuberance surrounding the premiere of *Hora Novissima* serves as prelude to the rest of the piece's story: a history that parallels, in many ways, the overall narrative of art music in the 20th century. Scholars who have made even a cursory study of trends in the arts over the course of the last century will recognize familiar patterns in the criticism surrounding Parker's work. The story of *Hora Novissima*'s reception over time serves to place it firmly in context and should enable readers to better understand its place in the repertoire.

The inclusion of background information concerning *De contemptu mundi* addresses an important need in studying any texted work: the written word, for most composers, is more than simply a set of phonemes upon which pitches are hung. Composers of Parker's caliber strive to marry text to music in ways that enhance both. A working knowledge of the poem, in terms of its overall structure, meter, and meaning is essential to a fuller understanding of the piece. Analysis of a choral piece, especially one with so venerable and rich a libretto, must include negotiating the meaning of the work's text on its own terms metrically and sonically. It also requires a deep understanding of at least three possible layers of meaning: how its author (and his/her contemporaries) understood the text, how the composer and his/her contemporaries interpreted it, and how current scholarship views it. All three layers are necessary to create as full a range of hermeneutic possibilities as possible. Analysis and understanding of poetry is not often a large part of a musician's training. This study may assist those who wish to better understand and appreciate Parker's great work of art

and the impressive poem that gave the composer his inspiration in approaching a difficult text set to a meter unfamiliar to most English speakers.

Hora Novissima is an excellent example of the Trans-Atlantic, Anglo-American spirit of the Second New England School. Parker was not striving for any sort of uniquely American sound; indeed, he was more interested in the universal aspects of music and typically eschewed nationalistic impulses as unnecessary and, perhaps, unartistic. Oddly, this opinion, in flying in the face of the prevailing norms of many European composers, seems to mark him as an American composer, a sort of anti-maverick. Perhaps posterity will eventually judge his work on its own merits: for what it contains (excellent counterpoint, fine melodies, solid orchestration, interesting thematic development), rather than what it seems to lack (easily identifiable Americanisms).

Analyzing the work based on its musical content reveals a finely written cantata by a composer approaching the full depth of his command of choral and orchestral forces. *Hora Novissima* is, indeed, impressive, as editor H. Wiley Hitchcock noted in a reprint of the work's score in 1972.³⁹⁸ His hint that the work is not an entertaining one, however, must be challenged. Six generations of conductors and concertgoers have found great value in *Hora Novissima*. Audiences continue to be charmed by its tunefulness, moved by its passion, and yes, impressed by its grandeur and erudition. It is sincerely hoped that this document will encourage a stronger desire to study, appreciate, and perform this excellent piece. As the 100th anniversary of Horatio Parker's passing approaches in 2019, there is now certainly enough historical distance

³⁹⁸ H. Wiley Hitchcock, Introduction to Horatio Parker, *Hora Novissima* (New York, Da Capo Press, 1972), n.p.

between his lifetime and the present day to allow for a new appraisal of the quality of his pieces.

That chronological distance will hopefully allow more of the music of Parker and his New England contemporaries to be reclaimed by performers and audiences. While Chadwick, Beach, Foote, and Parker are never likely to be canonical composers, their music is of excellent quality and contains a distinctiveness of voice that makes studying their output a fascinating endeavor. Their work may have sounded dated and derivative to 20th-century critics with more adventurous (and sometimes more narrowly tolerant) tastes, but reappraisal by more recent writers has begun the process of rehabilitation that may, eventually, allow some of the seemingly empty years of American composition to be filled.

Parker's voice comes to full maturity in *Hora Novissima*. That maturity coincides with a huge change in compositional practice across all of Western Art Music. His later compositions reflect some of that stylistic upheaval, but *Hora Novissima* stands firmly in the "now" of its own day – a work of art designed to fit its own world, not necessarily to lead the way toward new styles. Parker is unapologetic, clearly believing that a conservative approach best suited the needs of his libretto. Given the success of the piece compositionally and emotionally, his instincts were correct. Parker's masterpiece deserves a place in the repertoire.

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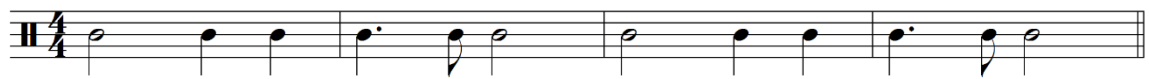
Appendix A

Rhythmic Motives in *Hora Novissima*

Hora Novissima's libretto is drawn from the Medieval Latin poem *De contemptu mundi*. Bernard of Cluny's lengthy poem is set from beginning to end in an unchanging dactylic hexameter,³⁹⁹ which creates a significant challenge for composers wishing to set large sections of it. The repetitious metric scheme of the poem is noted by several critics, most of whom praise Horatio Parker's skillful manipulation of the meter into a large array of rhythmic ideas. Below is a list of rhythmic motives employed by Parker as a means of adding variety to the work. Because this list is an attempt to illustrate Parker's adept manipulation of the metric scheme of *De contemptu mundi*, only rhythmic ideas drawn from the texted portions of the piece have been noted. While the list is not exhaustive, it is certainly illustrative of the immense rhythmic variety and vitality in *Hora Novissima*. The Arabic numerals each refer to a particular rhythmic motive; if there is a letter modifying the numeral (1B, for example), that motive is closely related to others bearing the same number. Each motive is identified, by movement and measure numbers, at its first appearance only. Most appear in other locations throughout the work, as well. No attempt has been made to tie certain rhythmic concepts to any interpretive possibilities, although that type of hermeneutic approach may yield fascinating insights into the work in the future. 41 individual rhythmic ideas have been isolated, several with recognizable variants that further enrich the possibility of rhythmic diversity.

³⁹⁹ See Chapter IV above for a more complete discussion of the poem and its meter.

1.

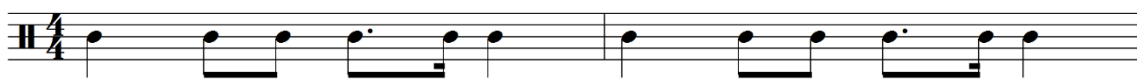


4.



Mvt. II, mm. 9-10

4A.



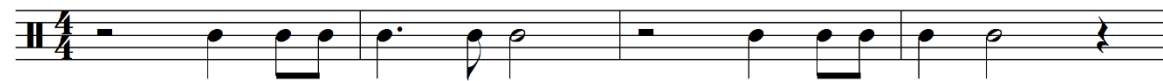
Mvt. II, mm. 19-20

5.



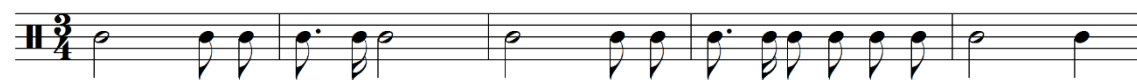
Mvt. II, mm. 39-42

6.



Mvt. II, mm. 74-77

1D.



Mvt. III, mm. 9-13

1E.



Mvt. III, mm. 33-38

7.



Mvt. III, mm. 57-61

8.



5



Mvt. III, mm. 73-80

9.



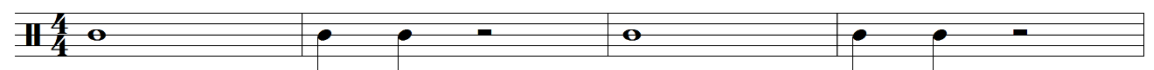
Mvt. III, 82-86

7A.



Mvt. III, mm. 88-95

8A.



5



Mvt. IV, mm. 9-16

9A.



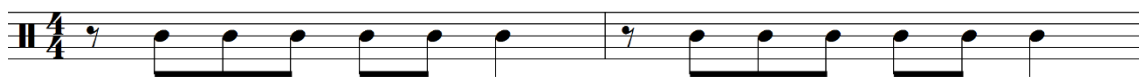
Mvt. IV, mm. 19-22

10.



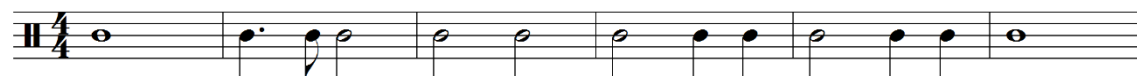
Mvt. IV, mm. 27-31

9B.



Mvt. IV, mm. 79-80

11.



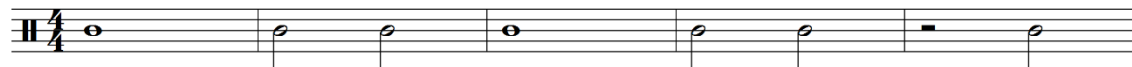
Mvt. IV, mm. 99-104

5A.



Mvt. IV, mm. 107-109

10A.



Mvt. IV, mm. 128-136

6



11A.



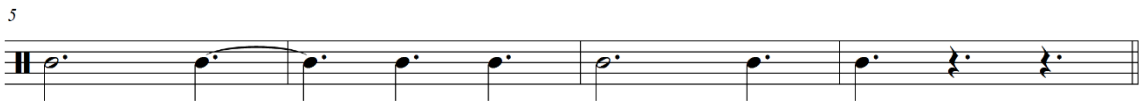
Mvt. V, mm. 19-24

12.



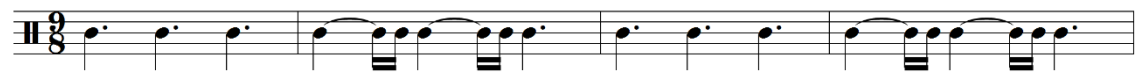
Mvt. V, mm. 33-38

11B.



Mvt. V, mm. 41-48

12A.



Mvt. V, mm. 58-65

13.



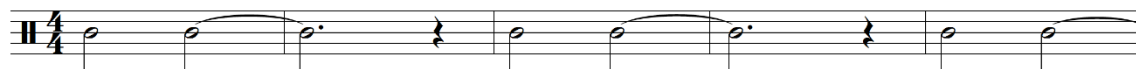
Mvt. V, mm. 66-71

14.

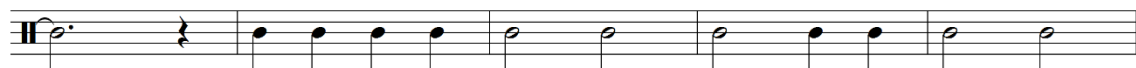


Mvt. VI, mm. 37-42

15.



6

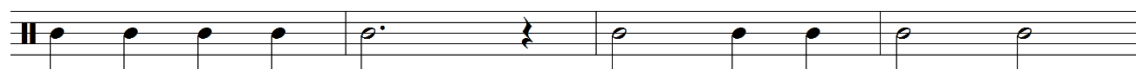


Mvt. VI, mm. 53-62

16.



5



Mvt. VI, mm. 69-76

17.



Mvt. VI, mm. 85-91

18.

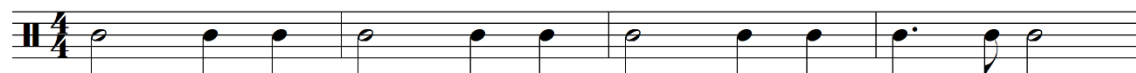


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Mvt. VI, mm. 133-140

19.

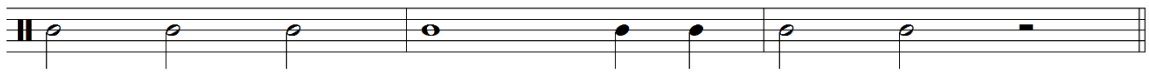


Mvt. VI, mm. 141-144

20.



4

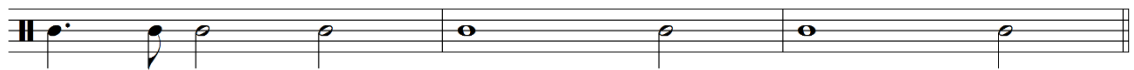


Mvt. VII, mm. 9-14

21.



4

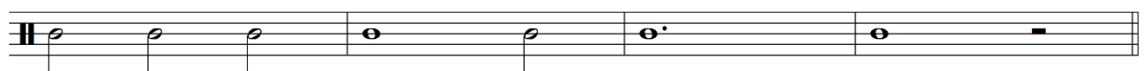


Mvt. VII, mm. 17-22

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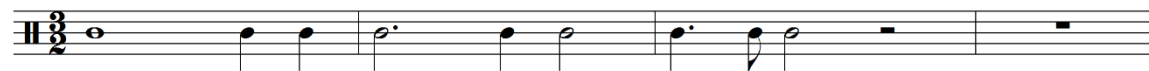


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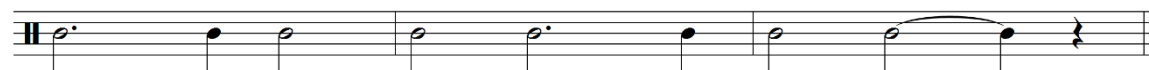


Mvt. VII, mm. 29-36

23.



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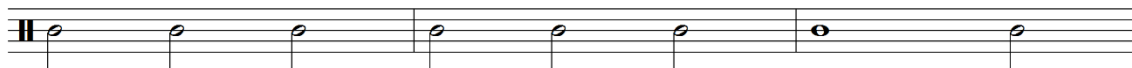


Mvt. VII, mm. 42-48

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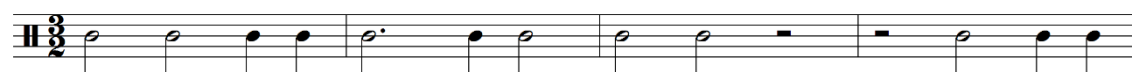


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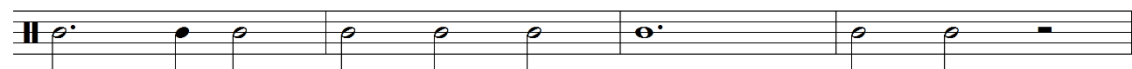


Mvt. VII, mm. 49-55

25.



5



Mvt. VII, mm. 61-68

26.



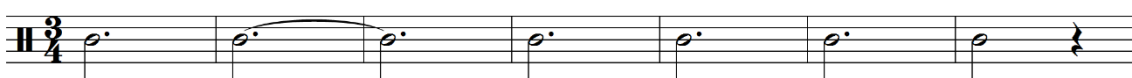
Mvt. VIII, mm. 13-20

26A.



Mvt. VIII, mm. 27-32

27.



Mvt. VIII, mm. 47-53

28.



7



Mvt. VIII, mm. 120-131

26B.

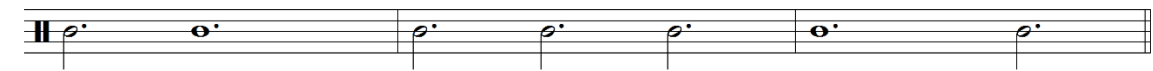


Mvt. VIII, mm. 152-153

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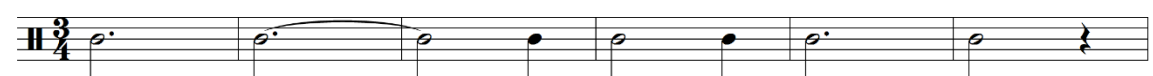


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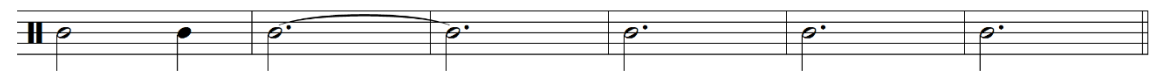


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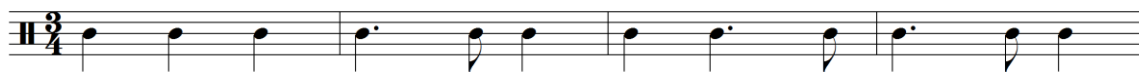


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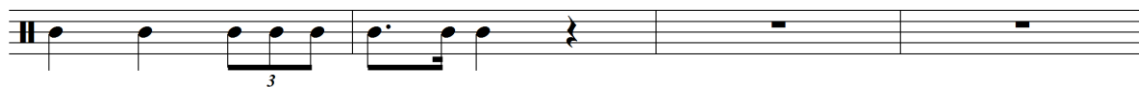


Mvt. VIII, mm. 174-185

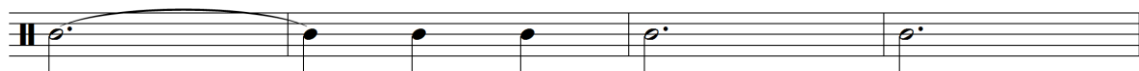
26C.



5



9



Mvt. IX, mm. 34-45

27A.



Mvt. IX, mm. 46-51

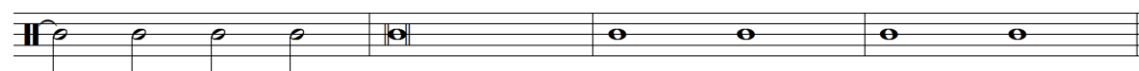
31.



5



9



Mvt. X, mm. 29-40

32.

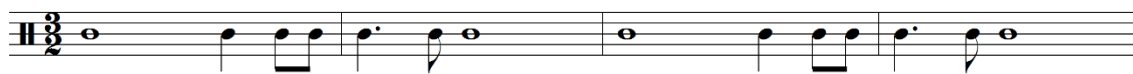


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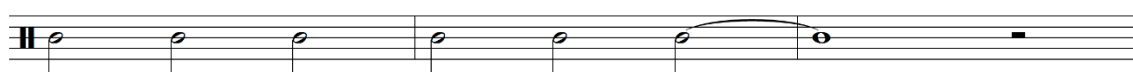


Mvt. XI, mm. 41-46

32A.



5

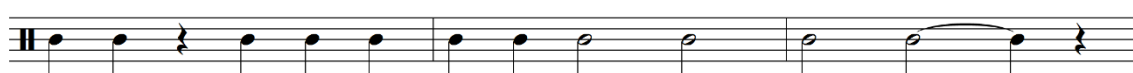


Mvt. XI, mm. 88-94

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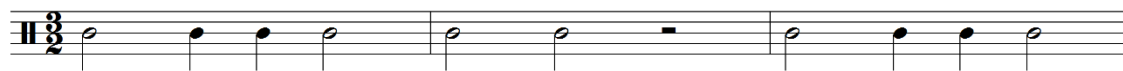


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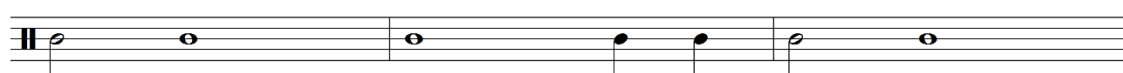


Mvt. XI, mm. 46-42

34.



4



Mvt. XI, mm. 96-102

34A.

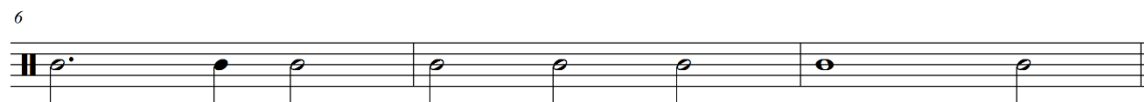


5



Mvt. XI, mm. 104-111





Mvt. XI, mm. 222-229



Mvt. XI, mm. 230-237